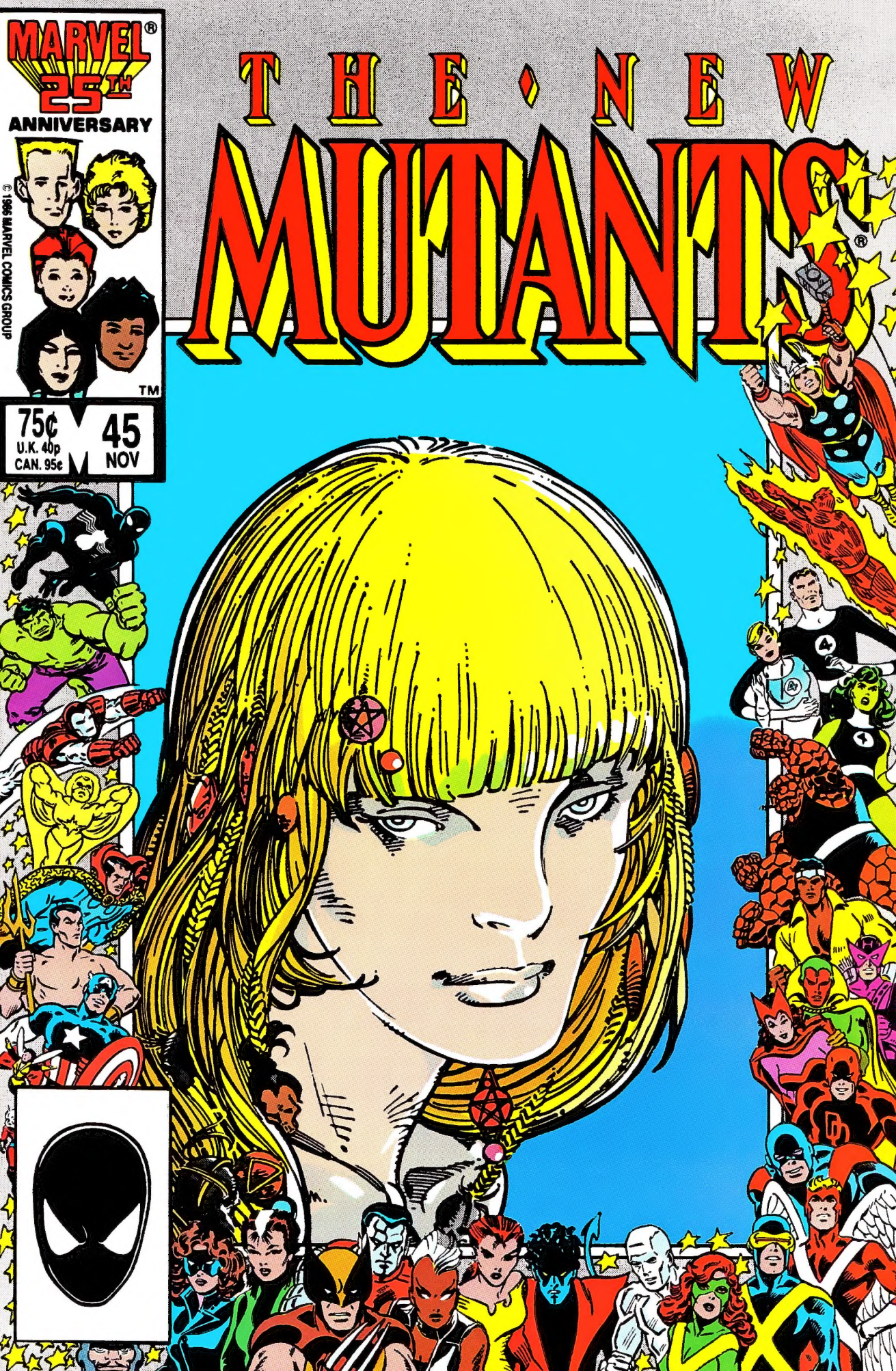
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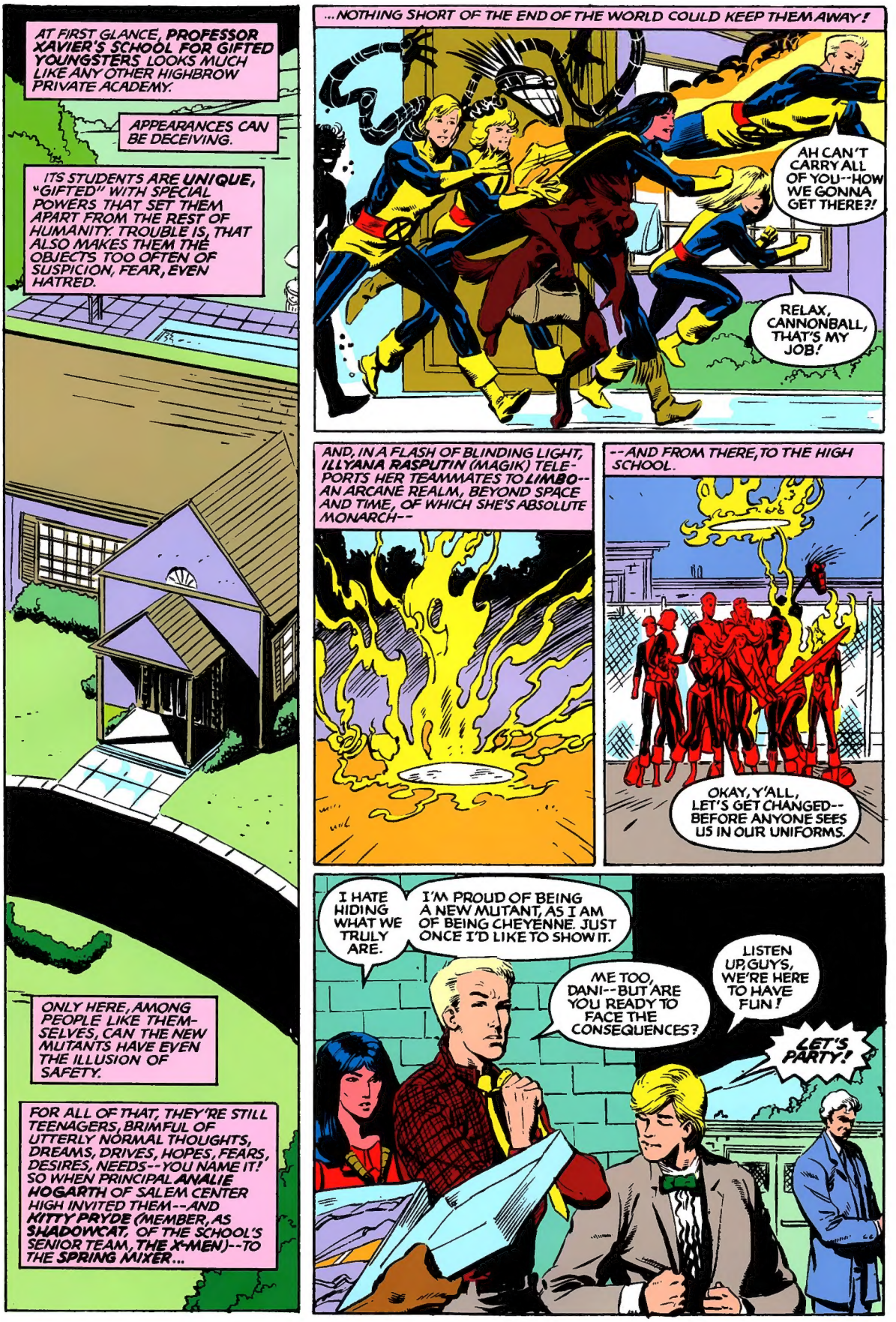
AT FIRST GLANCE, PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS LOOKS MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER HIGHBROW PRIVATE ACADEMY.
APPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING.
ITS STUDENTS ARE UNIQUE, "GIFTED" WITH SPECIAL POWERS THAT SET THEM APART FROM THE REST OF HUMANITY. TROUBLE IS, THAT ALSO MAKES THEM THE OBJECTS TOO OFTEN OF SUSPICION, FEAR, EVEN HATRED.
ONLY HERE, AMONG PEOPLE LIKE THEMSELVES, CAN THE NEW MUTANTS HAVE EVEN THE ILLUSION OF SAFETY.
FOR ALL OF THAT, THEY'RE STILL TEENAGERS, BRIMFUL OF UTTERLY NORMAL THOUGHTS, DREAMS, DRIVES, HOPES, FEARS, DESIRES, NEEDS--YOU NAME IT! SO WHEN PRINCIPAL ANALIE HOGARTH OF SALEM CENTER HIGH INVITED THEM--AND KITTY PRYDE (MEMBER, AS SHADOWCAT, OF THE SCHOOL'S SENIOR TEAM, THE X-MEN)--TO THE SPRING MIXER...
...NOTHING SHORT OF THE END OF THE WORLD COULD KEEP THEM AWAY!
AH CAN'T CARRY ALL OF YOU--HOW WE GONNA GET THERE?!
RELAX, CANNONBALL, THAT'S MY JOB!
AND, IN A FLASH OF BLINDING LIGHT, ILLYANA RASPUTIN (MAGIK) TELEPORTS HER TEAMMATES TO LIMBO--AN ARCANE REALM, BEYOND SPACE AND TIME, OF WHICH SHE'S ABSOLUTE MONARCH--
--AND FROM THERE, TO THE HIGH SCHOOL.
OKAY, Y'ALL, LET'S GET CHANGED--BEFORE ANYONE SEES US IN OUR UNIFORMS.
I HATE HIDING WHAT WE TRULY ARE.
I'M PROUD OF BEING A NEW MUTANT, AS I AM OF BEING CHEYENNE. JUST ONCE I'D LIKE TO SHOW IT.
ME TOO, DANI--BUT ARE YOU READY TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES?
LISTEN UP, GUYS, WE'RE HERE TO HAVE FUN!
LET'S PARTY!

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STAN LEE PRESENTS:

# WE WERE ONLY FOOLIN'

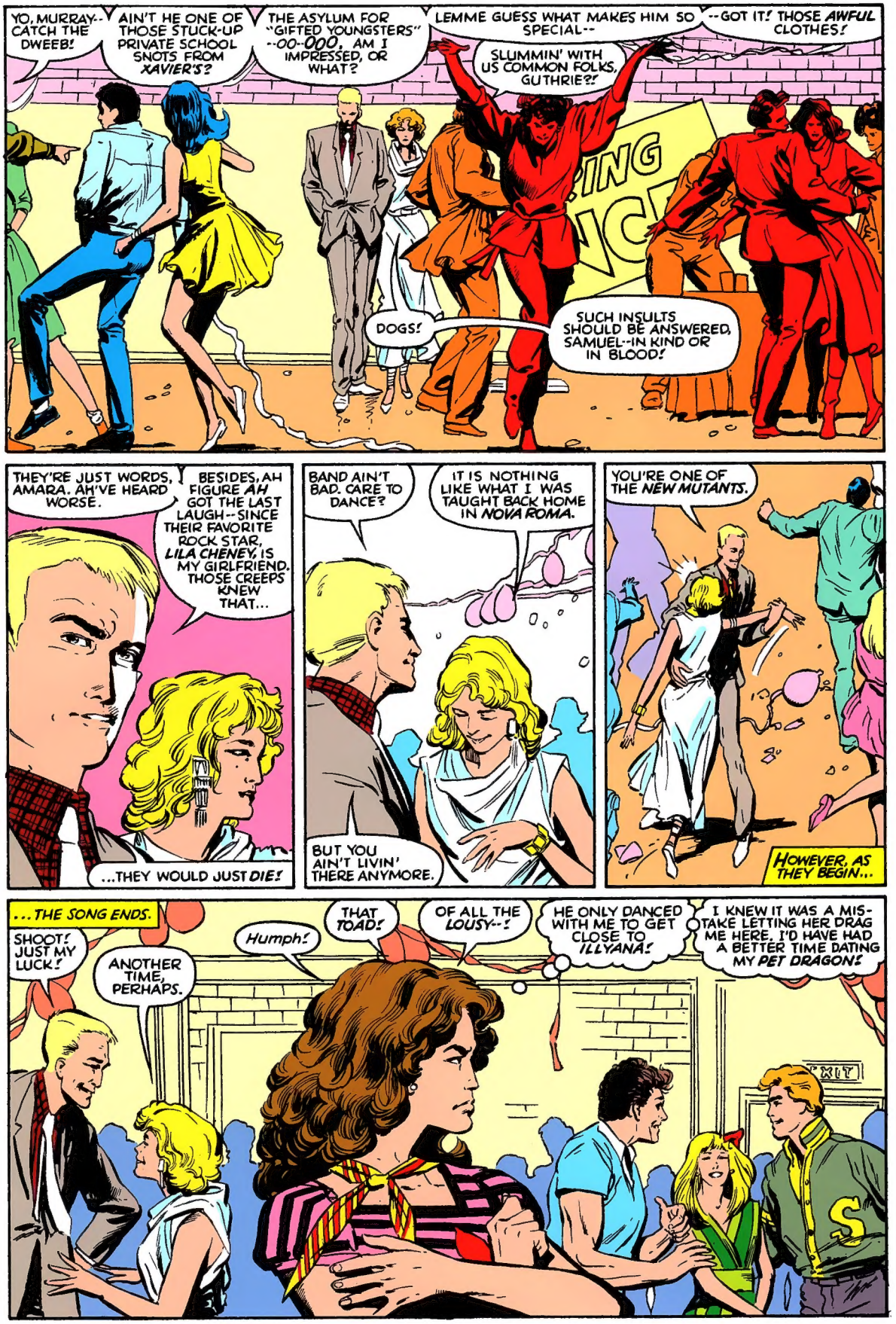
STARRING THE NEW MUTANTS

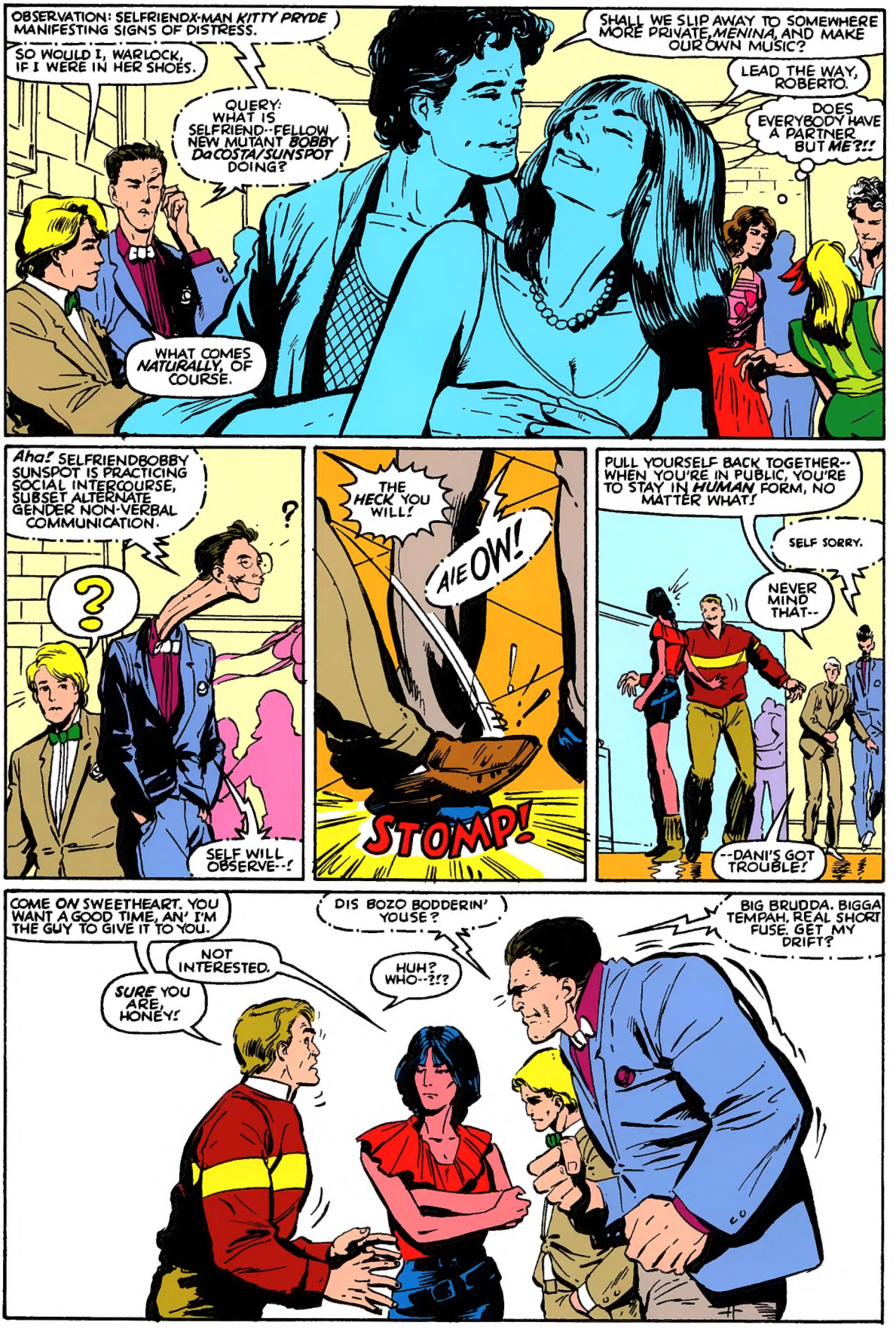
THE MUSIC IS LOUD, THE LIGHTS BRIGHT, THE BEAT HOT...

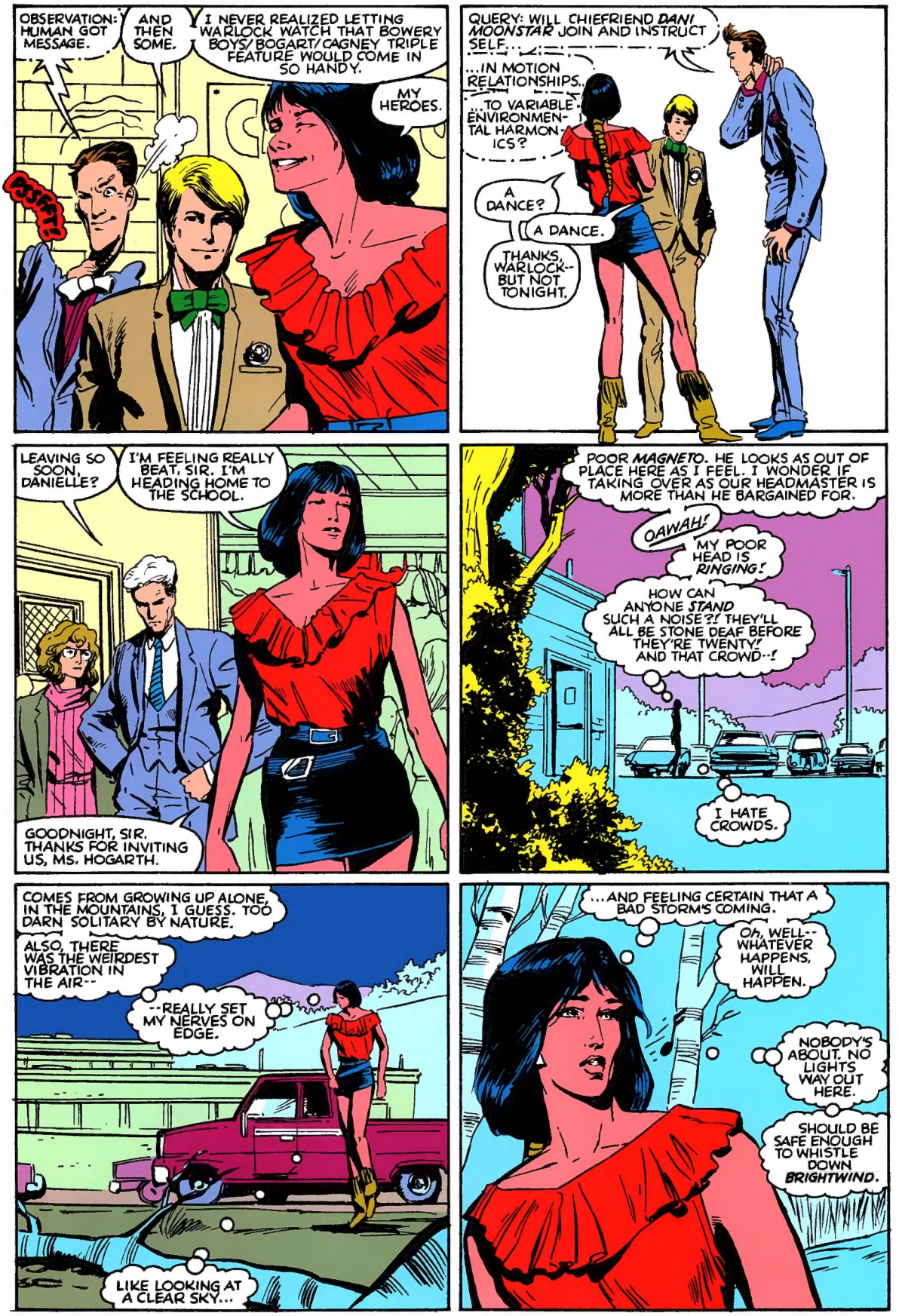
...AND EVERY KID PRESENT IS TRYING THEIR BEST TO HAVE A GREAT TIME.

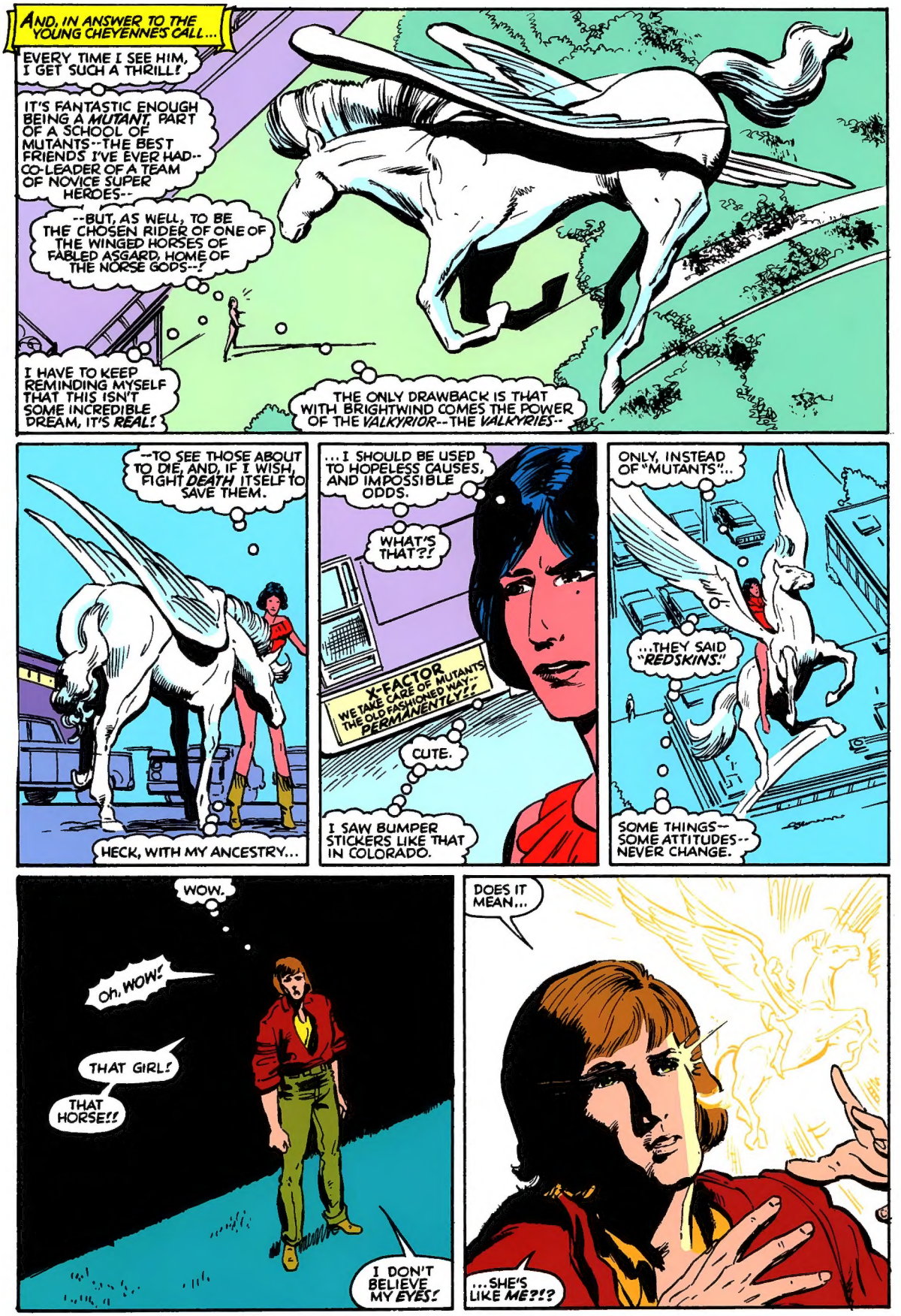
CHRIS CLAREMONT WRITER | JACKSON GUICE PENCILER | KYLE BAKER INKER | BUHALIS & ORZECHOWSKI LETTERERS | GLYNIS OLIVER COLORIST | ANN NOCENTI EDITOR | JIM SHOOTER EDITOR IN CHIEF

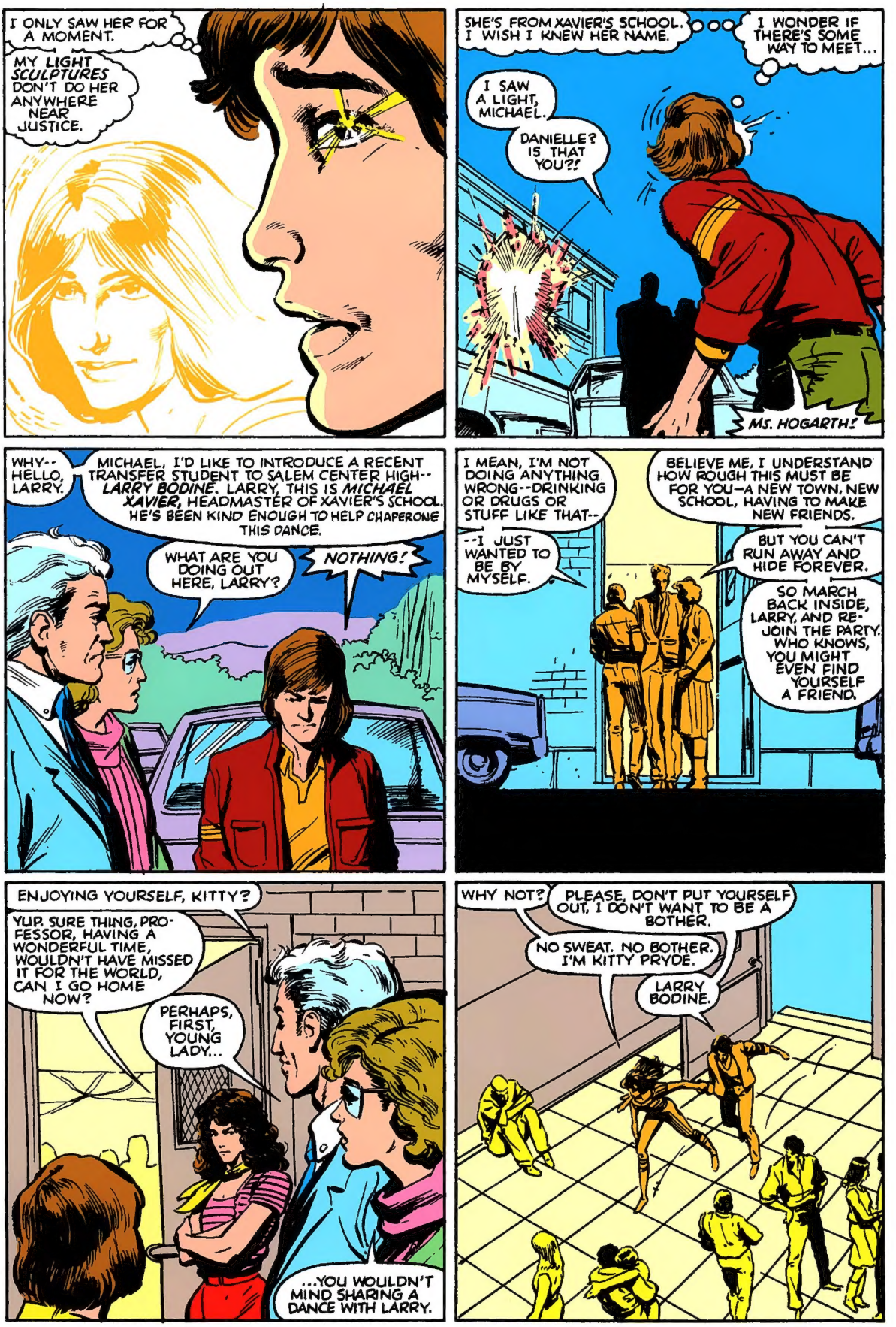
CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT AND BOB McLEOD

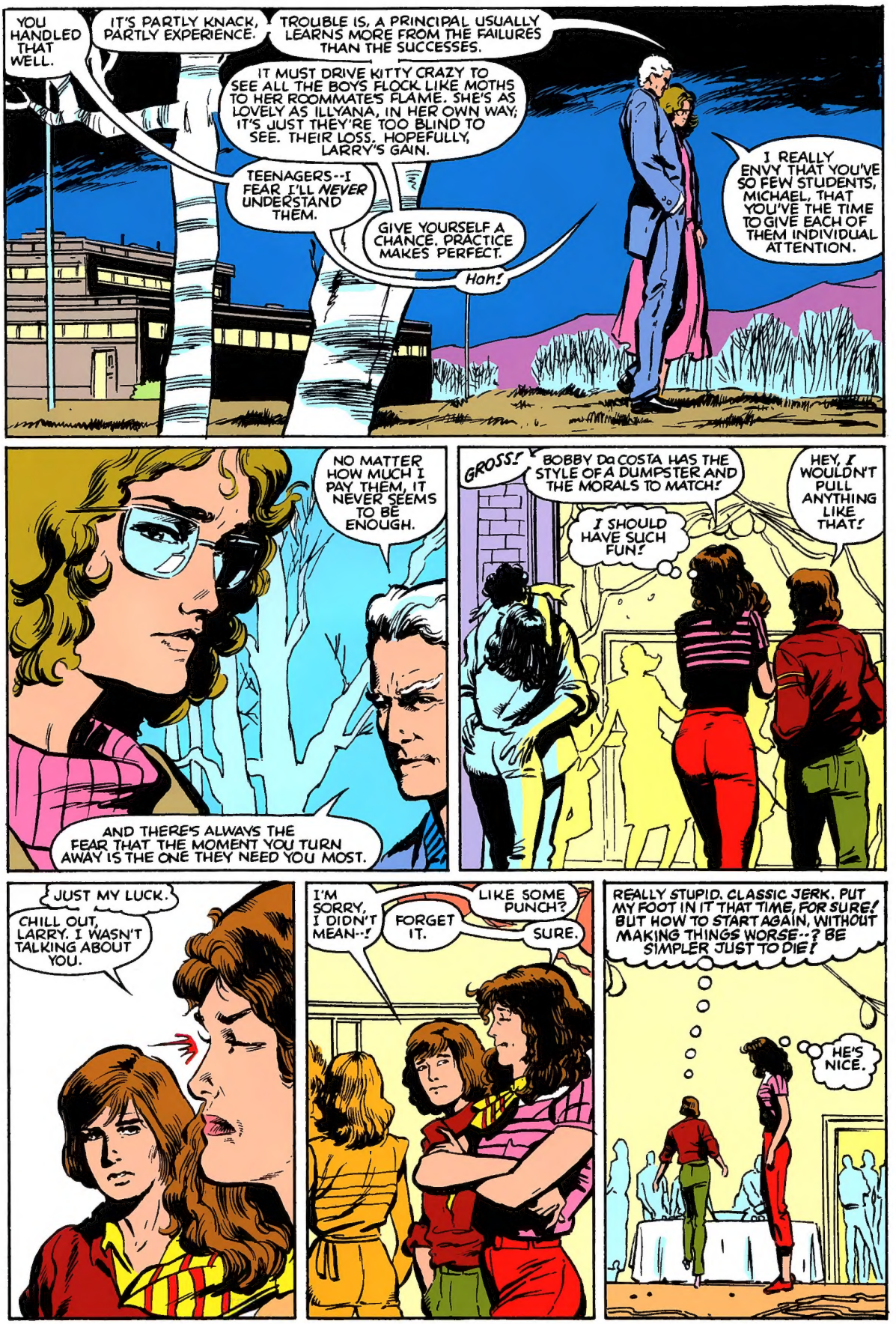

YO, MURRAY--CATCH THE DWEEB!
AIN'T HE ONE OF THOSE STUCK-UP PRIVATE SCHOOL SNOTS FROM *XAVIER'S*?
THE ASYLUM FOR "GIFTED YOUNGSTERS" --*OO-OOO*, AM I IMPRESSED, OR WHAT?
LEMME GUESS WHAT MAKES HIM SO SPECIAL--
--GOT IT! THOSE *AWFUL* CLOTHES!
SLUMMIN' WITH US COMMON FOLKS, GUTHRIE?!
DOGS!
SUCH INSULTS SHOULD BE ANSWERED, SAMUEL--IN KIND OR IN BLOOD!
THEY'RE JUST WORDS, AMARA. AH'VE HEARD WORSE.
BESIDES, AH FIGURE *AH* GOT THE LAST LAUGH--SINCE THEIR FAVORITE ROCK STAR, *LILA CHENEY*, IS MY GIRLFRIEND. THOSE CREEPS KNEW THAT...
...THEY WOULD JUST *DIE*!
BAND AIN'T BAD. CARE TO DANCE?
IT IS NOTHING LIKE WHAT I WAS TAUGHT BACK HOME IN *NOVA ROMA*.
BUT YOU AIN'T LIVIN' THERE ANYMORE.
YOU'RE ONE OF THE *NEW MUTANTS*.
*HOWEVER, AS THEY BEGIN...*
*...THE SONG ENDS.*
SHOOT! JUST MY LUCK!
ANOTHER TIME, PERHAPS.
*Humph!*
THAT *TOAD*!
OF ALL THE *LOUSY--*!
HE ONLY DANCED WITH ME TO GET CLOSE TO *ILLYANA*!
I KNEW IT WAS A MISTAKE LETTING HER DRAG ME HERE. I'D HAVE HAD A BETTER TIME DATING MY *PET DRAGON*!
EXIT

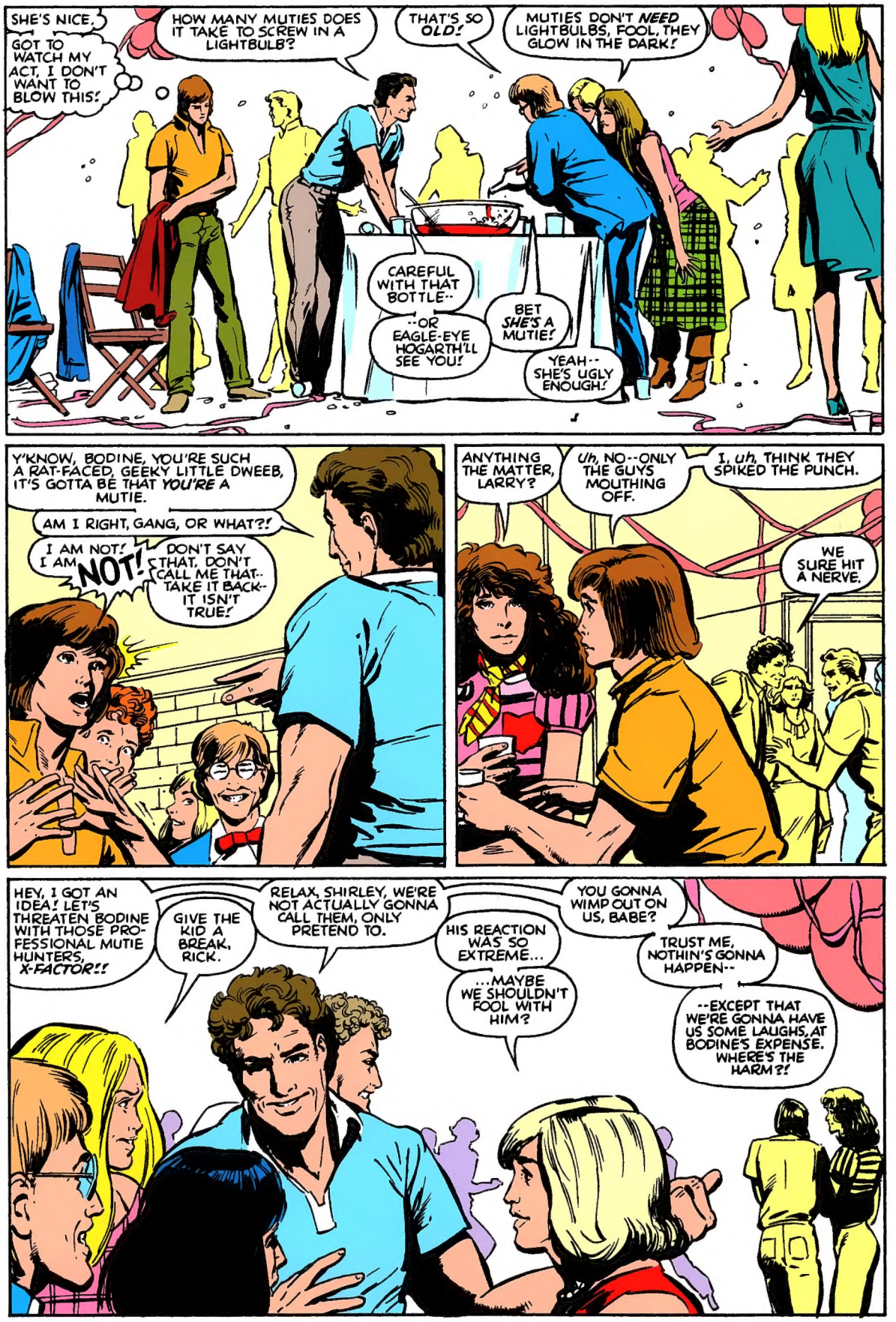

OBSERVATION: SELFRIENDX-MAN KITTY PRYDE MANIFESTING SIGNS OF DISTRESS.
SO WOULD I, WARLOCK, IF I WERE IN HER SHOES.
QUERY: WHAT IS SELFRIEND--FELLOW NEW MUTANT BOBBY DaCOSTA/SUNSPOT DOING?
WHAT COMES NATURALLY, OF COURSE.
SHALL WE SLIP AWAY TO SOMEWHERE MORE PRIVATE, MENINA, AND MAKE OUR OWN MUSIC?
LEAD THE WAY, ROBERTO.
DOES EVERYBODY HAVE A PARTNER BUT ME?!!
Aha! SELFRIENDBOBBY SUNSPOT IS PRACTICING SOCIAL INTERCOURSE, SUBSET ALTERNATE GENDER NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION.
?
?
SELF WILL OBSERVE--!
THE HECK YOU WILL!
AIE OW!
STOMP!
PULL YOURSELF BACK TOGETHER-- WHEN YOU'RE IN PUBLIC, YOU'RE TO STAY IN HUMAN FORM, NO MATTER WHAT!
SELF SORRY.
NEVER MIND THAT--
--DANI'S GOT TROUBLE!
COME ON SWEETHEART. YOU WANT A GOOD TIME, AN' I'M THE GUY TO GIVE IT TO YOU.
NOT INTERESTED.
SURE YOU ARE, HONEY!
DIS BOZO BODDERIN' YOUSE?
HUH? WHO--?!?
BIG BRUDDA. BIGGA TEMPAH. REAL SHORT FUSE. GET MY DRIFT?


OBSERVATION: HUMAN GOT MESSAGE.
AND THEN SOME.
I NEVER REALIZED LETTING WARLOCK WATCH THAT BOWERY BOYS/BOGART/CAGNEY TRIPLE FEATURE WOULD COME IN SO HANDY.
MY HEROES.
PSSFT?
QUERY: WILL CHIEFRIEND DANI MOONSTAR JOIN AND INSTRUCT SELF...
...IN MOTION RELATIONSHIPS.
...TO VARIABLE ENVIRONMENTAL HARMONICS?
A DANCE?
A DANCE.
THANKS, WARLOCK--BUT NOT TONIGHT.
LEAVING SO SOON, DANIELLE?
I'M FEELING REALLY BEAT, SIR. I'M HEADING HOME TO THE SCHOOL.
GOODNIGHT, SIR. THANKS FOR INVITING US, MS. HOGARTH.
POOR MAGNETO. HE LOOKS AS OUT OF PLACE HERE AS I FEEL. I WONDER IF TAKING OVER AS OUR HEADMASTER IS MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.
OAWAH!
MY POOR HEAD IS RINGING!
HOW CAN ANYONE STAND SUCH A NOISE?! THEY'LL ALL BE STONE DEAF BEFORE THEY'RE TWENTY! AND THAT CROWD--!
I HATE CROWDS.
COMES FROM GROWING UP ALONE, IN THE MOUNTAINS, I GUESS. TOO DARN SOLITARY BY NATURE.
ALSO, THERE WAS THE WEIRDEST VIBRATION IN THE AIR--
--REALLY SET MY NERVES ON EDGE.
LIKE LOOKING AT A CLEAR SKY...
...AND FEELING CERTAIN THAT A BAD STORM'S COMING.
OH, WELL--WHATEVER HAPPENS, WILL HAPPEN.
NOBODY'S ABOUT. NO LIGHTS WAY OUT HERE.
SHOULD BE SAFE ENOUGH TO WHISTLE DOWN BRIGHTWIND.

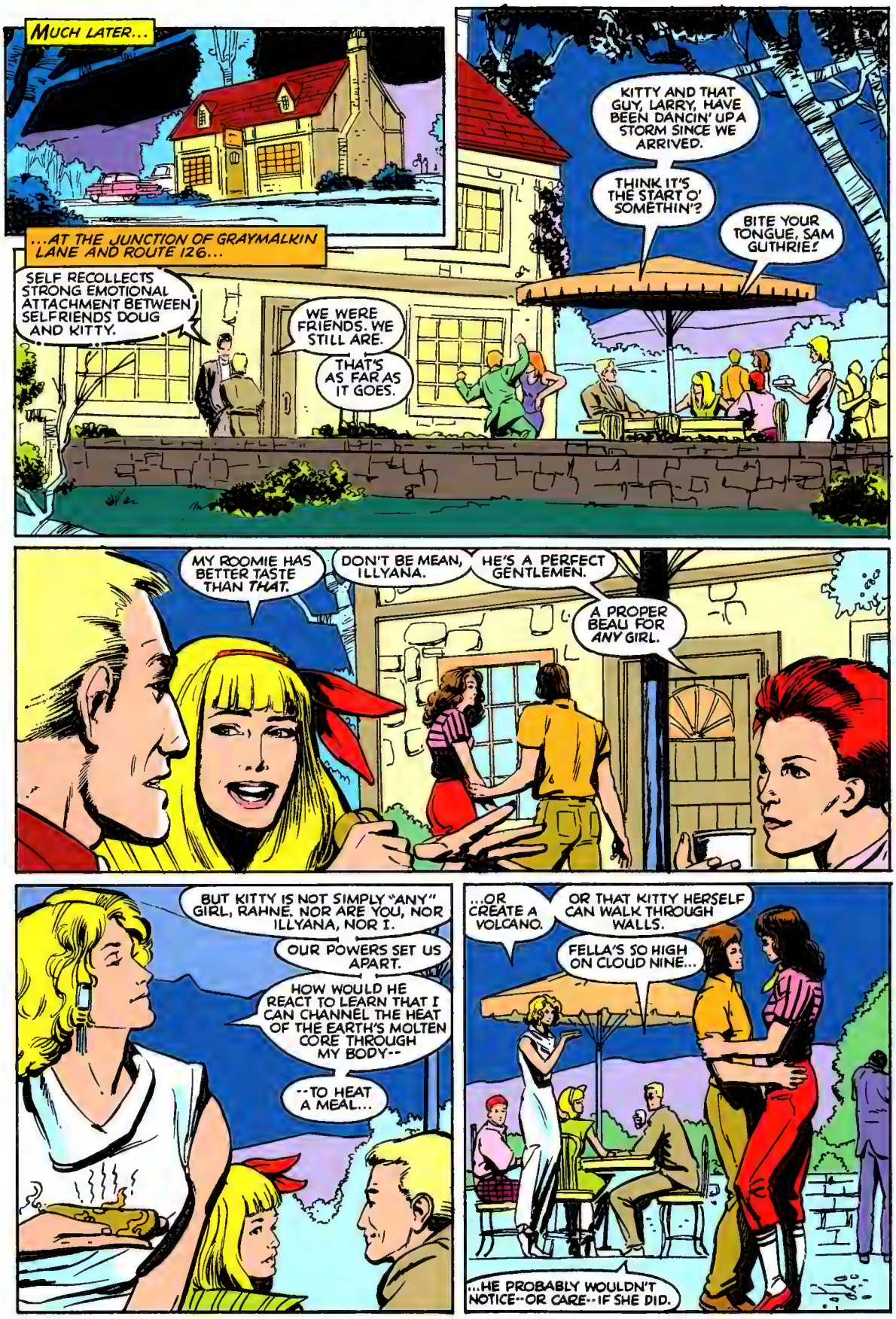

AND, IN ANSWER TO THE YOUNG CHEYENNE'S CALL...
EVERY TIME I SEE HIM, I GET SUCH A THRILL!
IT'S FANTASTIC ENOUGH BEING A MUTANT, PART OF A SCHOOL OF MUTANTS--THE BEST FRIENDS I'VE EVER HAD--CO-LEADER OF A TEAM OF NOVICE SUPER HEROES--
--BUT, AS WELL, TO BE THE CHOSEN RIDER OF ONE OF THE WINGED HORSES OF FABLED ASGARD, HOME OF THE NORSE GODS--?
I HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING MYSELF THAT THIS ISN'T SOME INCREDIBLE DREAM, IT'S REAL!
THE ONLY DRAWBACK IS THAT WITH BRIGHTWIND COMES THE POWER OF THE VALKYRIOR--THE VALKYRIES--
--TO SEE THOSE ABOUT TO DIE, AND, IF I WISH, FIGHT DEATH ITSELF TO SAVE THEM.
HECK, WITH MY ANCESTRY...
...I SHOULD BE USED TO HOPELESS CAUSES, AND IMPOSSIBLE ODDS.
WHAT'S THAT?!
X-FACTOR WE TAKE CARE OF MUTANTS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY-- PERMANENTLY!!
CUTE.
I SAW BUMPER STICKERS LIKE THAT IN COLORADO.
ONLY, INSTEAD OF "MUTANTS"...
...THEY SAID "REDSKINS."
SOME THINGS--SOME ATTITUDES--NEVER CHANGE.
WOW.
OH, WOW!
THAT GIRL!
THAT HORSE!!
I DON'T BELIEVE MY EYES!
DOES IT MEAN...
...SHE'S LIKE ME?!?

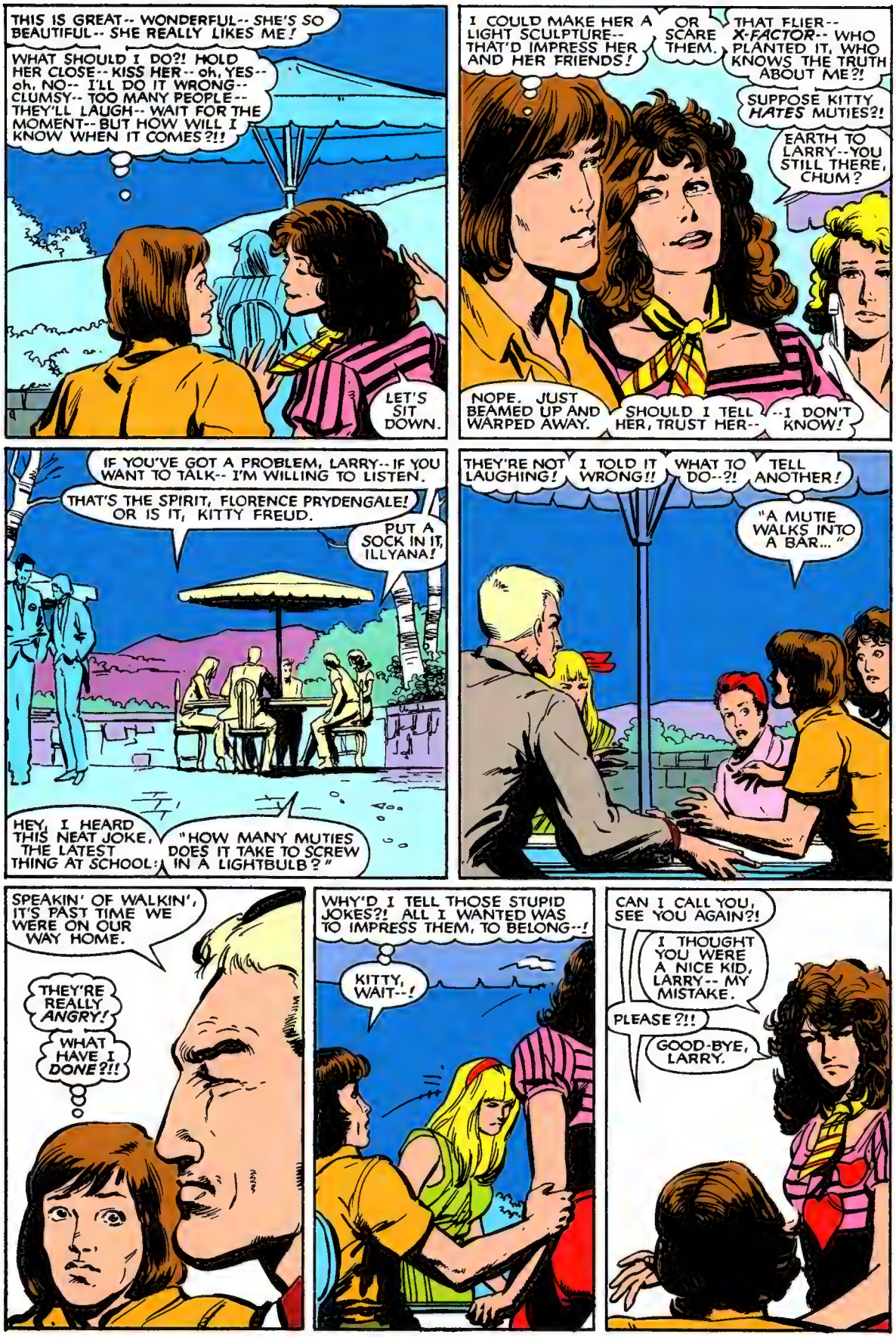

I ONLY SAW HER FOR A MOMENT.
MY LIGHT SCULPTURES DON'T DO HER ANYWHERE NEAR JUSTICE.
SHE'S FROM XAVIER'S SCHOOL. I WISH I KNEW HER NAME.
I WONDER IF THERE'S SOME WAY TO MEET...
I SAW A LIGHT, MICHAEL.
DANIELLE? IS THAT YOU?!
MS. HOGARTH!
WHY-- HELLO, LARRY.
MICHAEL, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE A RECENT TRANSFER STUDENT TO SALEM CENTER HIGH-- LARRY BODINE. LARRY, THIS IS MICHAEL XAVIER, HEADMASTER OF XAVIER'S SCHOOL. HE'S BEEN KIND ENOUGH TO HELP CHAPERONE THIS DANCE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE, LARRY?
NOTHING!
I MEAN, I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING WRONG--DRINKING OR DRUGS OR STUFF LIKE THAT--
--I JUST WANTED TO BE BY MYSELF.
BELIEVE ME, I UNDERSTAND HOW ROUGH THIS MUST BE FOR YOU--A NEW TOWN, NEW SCHOOL, HAVING TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS.
BUT YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY AND HIDE FOREVER.
SO MARCH BACK INSIDE, LARRY, AND RE-JOIN THE PARTY. WHO KNOWS, YOU MIGHT EVEN FIND YOURSELF A FRIEND.
ENJOYING YOURSELF, KITTY?
YUP. SURE THING, PROFESSOR, HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME, WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED IT FOR THE WORLD, CAN I GO HOME NOW?
PERHAPS, FIRST, YOUNG LADY...
...YOU WOULDN'T MIND SHARING A DANCE WITH LARRY.
WHY NOT?
PLEASE, DON'T PUT YOURSELF OUT, I DON'T WANT TO BE A BOTHER.
NO SWEAT. NO BOTHER. I'M KITTY PRYDE.
LARRY BODINE.

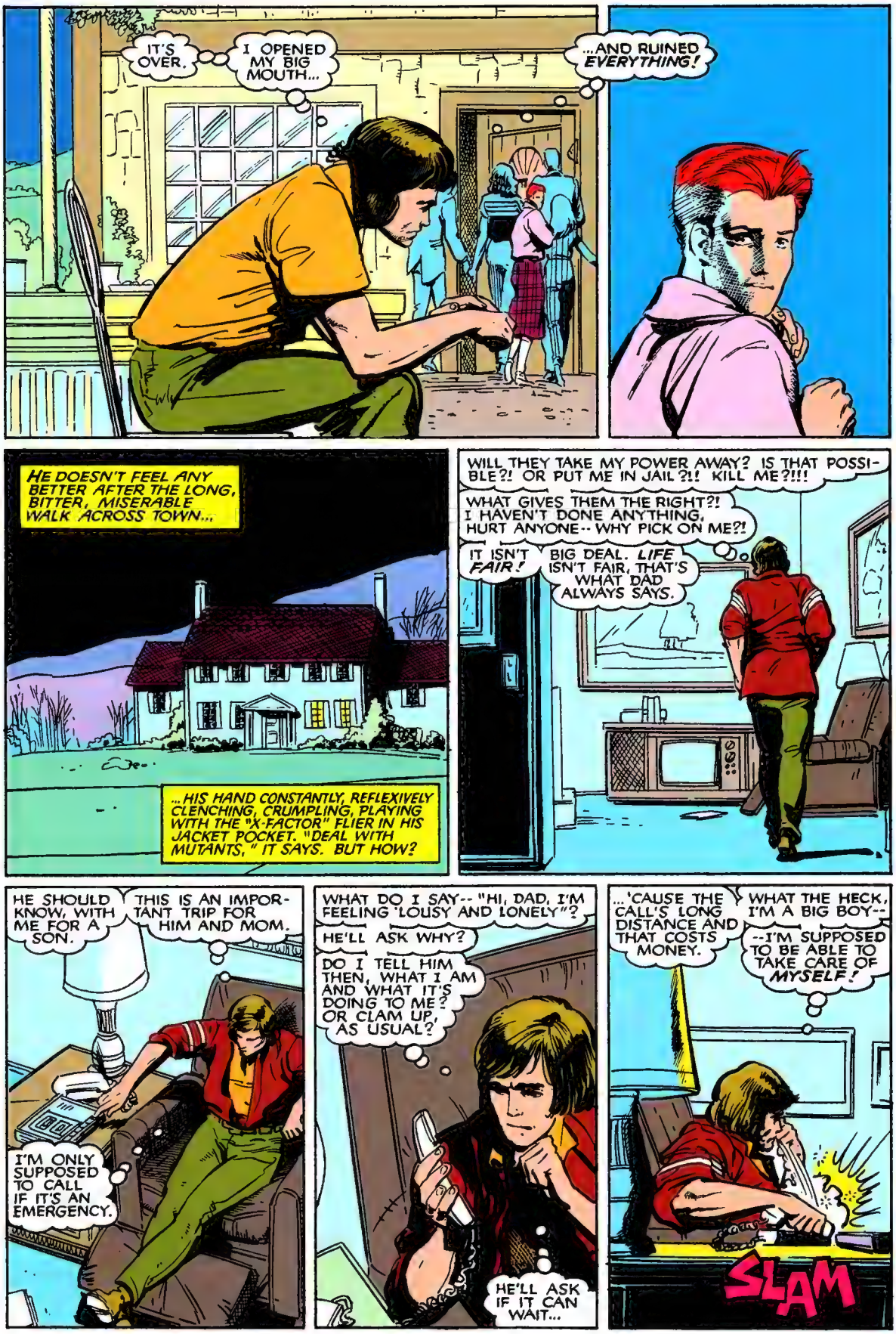

YOU HANDLED THAT WELL.
IT'S PARTLY KNACK, PARTLY EXPERIENCE.
TROUBLE IS, A PRINCIPAL USUALLY LEARNS MORE FROM THE FAILURES THAN THE SUCCESSES.
IT MUST DRIVE KITTY CRAZY TO SEE ALL THE BOYS FLOCK LIKE MOTHS TO HER ROOMMATE'S FLAME. SHE'S AS LOVELY AS ILLYANA, IN HER OWN WAY; IT'S JUST THEY'RE TOO BLIND TO SEE. THEIR LOSS, HOPEFULLY, LARRY'S GAIN.
TEENAGERS--I FEAR I'LL *NEVER* UNDERSTAND THEM.
GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE. PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.
*Hah!*
I REALLY ENVY THAT YOU'VE SO FEW STUDENTS, MICHAEL, THAT YOU'VE THE TIME TO GIVE EACH OF THEM INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I PAY THEM, IT NEVER SEEMS TO BE ENOUGH.
AND THERE'S ALWAYS THE FEAR THAT THE MOMENT YOU TURN AWAY IS THE ONE THEY NEED YOU MOST.
*GROSS!*
BOBBY DaCOSTA HAS THE STYLE OF A DUMPSTER AND THE MORALS TO MATCH!
*I SHOULD HAVE SUCH FUN!*
HEY, I WOULDN'T PULL ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
JUST MY LUCK.
CHILL OUT, LARRY. I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT YOU.
I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN--!
FORGET IT.
LIKE SOME PUNCH?
SURE.
REALLY STUPID. CLASSIC JERK. PUT MY FOOT IN IT THAT TIME, FOR SURE! BUT HOW TO START AGAIN, WITHOUT MAKING THINGS WORSE--? BE SIMPLER JUST TO DIE!
HE'S NICE.

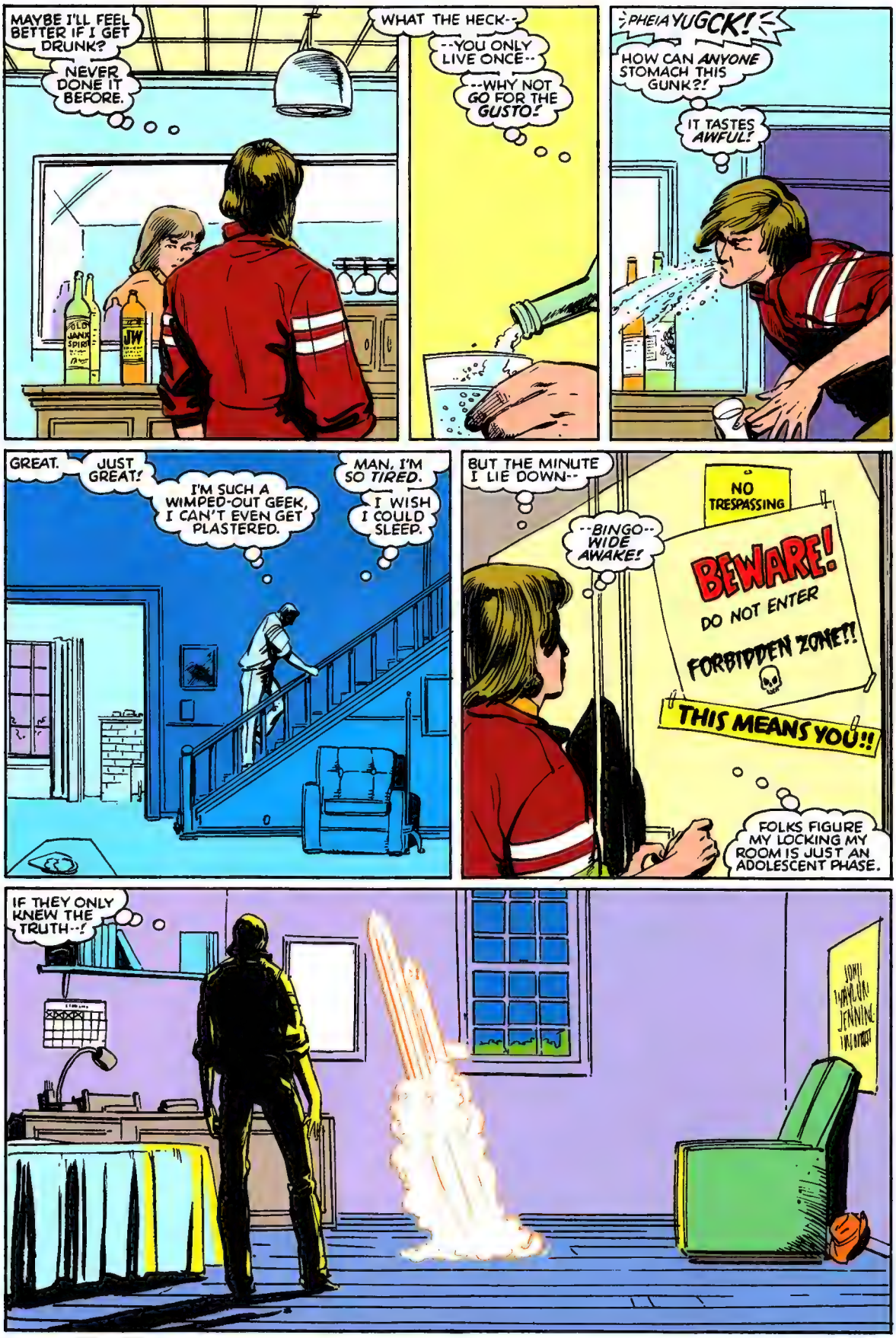

SHE'S NICE. GOT TO WATCH MY ACT, I DON'T WANT TO BLOW THIS!
HOW MANY MUTIES DOES IT TAKE TO SCREW IN A LIGHTBULB?
THAT'S SO OLD!
MUTIES DON'T NEED LIGHTBULBS, FOOL, THEY GLOW IN THE DARK!
CAREFUL WITH THAT BOTTLE--
--OR EAGLE-EYE HOGARTH'LL SEE YOU!
BET SHE'S A MUTIE!
YEAH-- SHE'S UGLY ENOUGH!
Y'KNOW, BODINE, YOU'RE SUCH A RAT-FACED, GEEKY LITTLE DWEEB, IT'S GOTTA BE THAT YOU'RE A MUTIE.
AM I RIGHT, GANG, OR WHAT?!
I AM NOT! I AM NOT!
DON'T SAY THAT. DON'T CALL ME THAT-- TAKE IT BACK-- IT ISN'T TRUE!
ANYTHING THE MATTER, LARRY?
Uh, NO--ONLY THE GUYS MOUTHING OFF.
I, uh, THINK THEY SPIKED THE PUNCH.
WE SURE HIT A NERVE.
HEY, I GOT AN IDEA! LET'S THREATEN BODINE WITH THOSE PROFESSIONAL MUTIE HUNTERS, X-FACTOR!!
GIVE THE KID A BREAK, RICK.
RELAX, SHIRLEY, WE'RE NOT ACTUALLY GONNA CALL THEM, ONLY PRETEND TO.
HIS REACTION WAS SO EXTREME...
...MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T FOOL WITH HIM?
YOU GONNA WIMP OUT ON US, BABE?
TRUST ME, NOTHIN'S GONNA HAPPEN--
--EXCEPT THAT WE'RE GONNA HAVE US SOME LAUGHS, AT BODINE'S EXPENSE. WHERE'S THE HARM?!

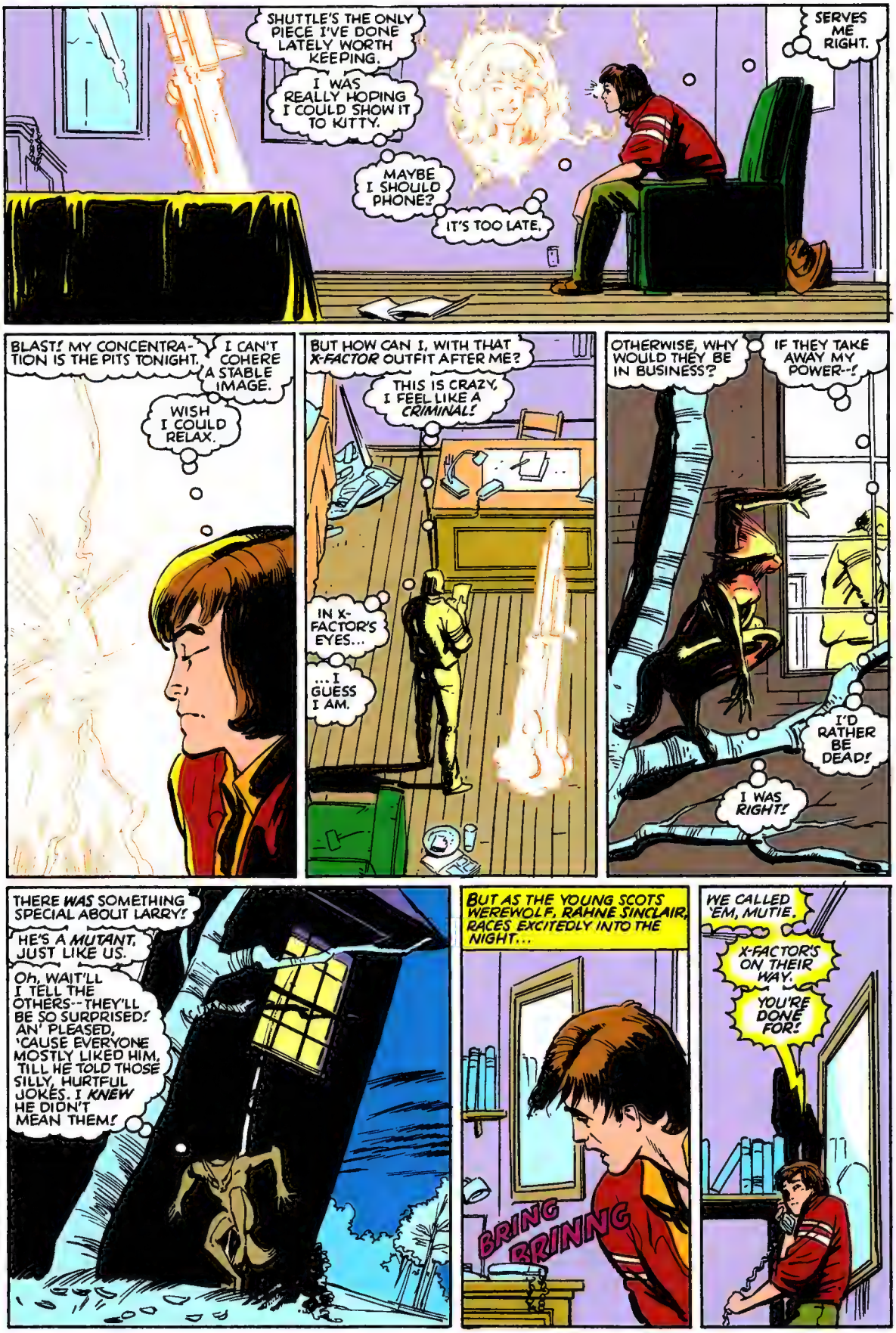
SOMETIME LATER, AS THE DANCE WINDS DOWN...
...THE NEW MUTANTS DECIDE TO HEAD OVER TO THEIR FAVORITE HANGOUT, HARRY'S HIDEAWAY, TO CONTINUE THE PARTY A WHILE LONGER.
WANT TO JOIN US, LARRY?
YOU MEAN IT, KITTY?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT YOU SECONDS.
WOULDN'T HAVE ASKED -- hic -- OTHERWISE.
WHOOOOOOO -- THAT WAS SOME PUNCH.
OR THIRDS. OR FOURTHS. OR FIFTHS.
BOY, oh BOY, AM I GOING TO REGRET THIS IN THE MORNING.
I LIKE HIM.
I LIKE HER. A LOT.
DOES SHE FEEL THE SAME?
WHERE WILL WE GO FROM HERE?
CALM DOWN, TIGER. YOU'RE GETTING WAY AHEAD OF YOURSELF-- WHAT'S THIS?
NO!
NO!
FEAR NO MORE!"
FACTOR
THE MUTANT PROFE
OFESSIONAL INVE
ID SOLUTIONS
UTANT MANAGE
RIOUS
WITHOUT
PROFESSIONALS.
· INVESTIGATION
ELIMINATION
CONTAINMENT
· CONFIDENTIAL SE
we know who you are, we know what you do and we're gonna tell FACTOR, mutie!
READY, LARRY?
YOU OKAY?
Uh, YEAH! ALL SET!
FINE!
ISN'T A BODY ALLOWED TO, uh, HAVE NERVES ON A FIRST DATE?
THAT'S SWEET.
IN THAT REGARD, CHUM...
... YOU'RE NOT ALONE.
SHALL WE BOOGIE?

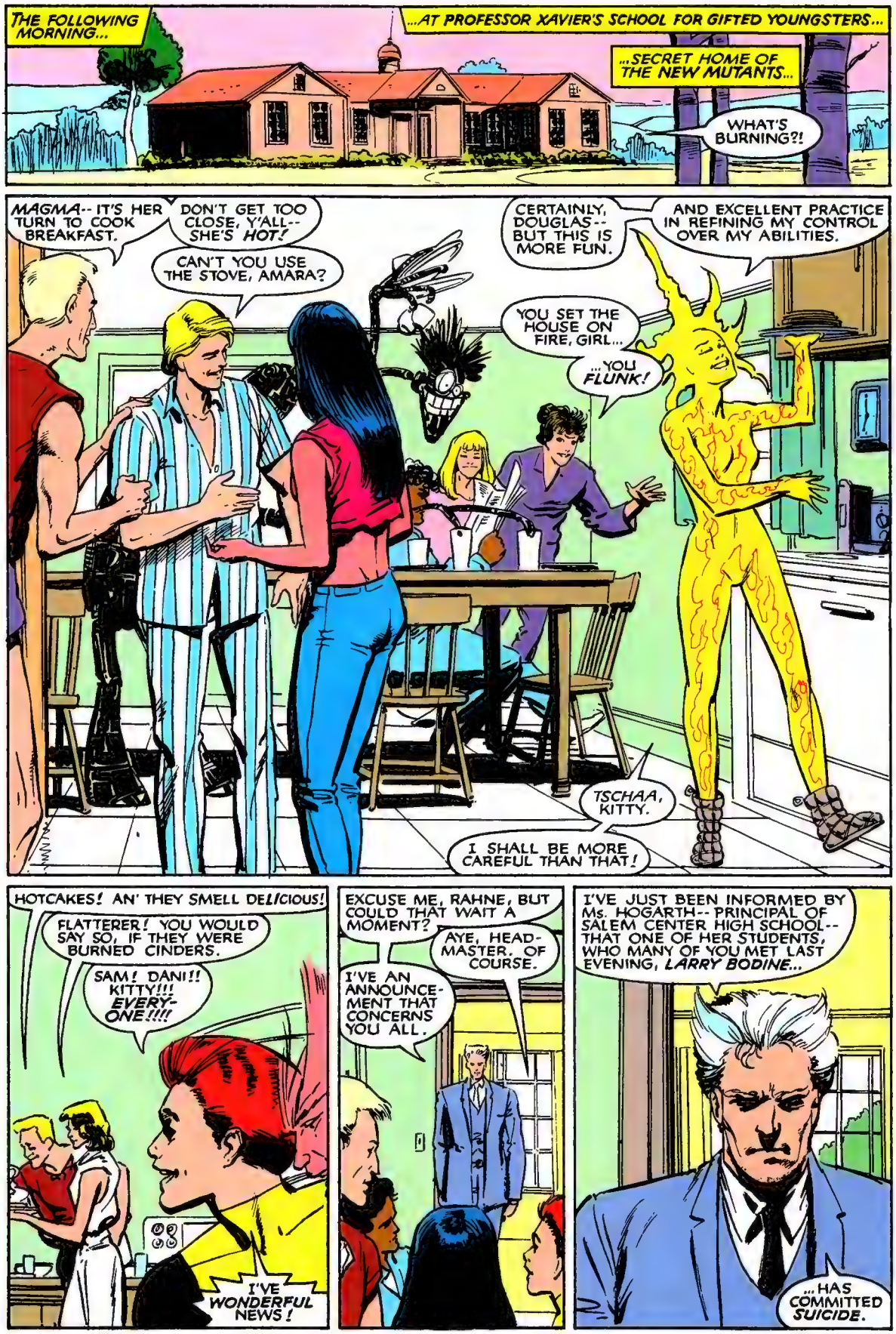

MUCH LATER...
...AT THE JUNCTION OF GRAYMALKIN LANE AND ROUTE 126...
SELF RECOLLECTS STRONG EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT BETWEEN SELFRIENDS DOUG AND KITTY.
WE WERE FRIENDS. WE STILL ARE.
THAT'S AS FAR AS IT GOES.
KITTY AND THAT GUY, LARRY, HAVE BEEN DANCIN' UP A STORM SINCE WE ARRIVED.
THINK IT'S THE START O' SOMETHIN'?
BITE YOUR TONGUE, SAM GUTHRIE!
MY ROOMIE HAS BETTER TASTE THAN THAT.
DON'T BE MEAN, ILLYANA.
HE'S A PERFECT GENTLEMEN.
A PROPER BEAU FOR ANY GIRL.
BUT KITTY IS NOT SIMPLY "ANY" GIRL, RAHNE. NOR ARE YOU, NOR ILLYANA, NOR I.
OUR POWERS SET US APART.
HOW WOULD HE REACT TO LEARN THAT I CAN CHANNEL THE HEAT OF THE EARTH'S MOLTEN CORE THROUGH MY BODY--
--TO HEAT A MEAL...
...OR CREATE A VOLCANO.
OR THAT KITTY HERSELF CAN WALK THROUGH WALLS.
FELLA'S SO HIGH ON CLOUD NINE...
...HE PROBABLY WOULDN'T NOTICE--OR CARE--IF SHE DID.


THIS IS GREAT-- WONDERFUL-- SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL-- SHE REALLY LIKES ME!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?! HOLD HER CLOSE-- KISS HER-- oh, YES-- oh, NO-- I'LL DO IT WRONG-- CLUMSY-- TOO MANY PEOPLE-- THEY'LL LAUGH-- WAIT FOR THE MOMENT-- BUT HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT COMES?!!
LET'S SIT DOWN.
I COULD MAKE HER A LIGHT SCULPTURE-- THAT'D IMPRESS HER AND HER FRIENDS!
OR SCARE THEM.
THAT FLIER-- X-FACTOR-- WHO PLANTED IT, WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH ABOUT ME?!
SUPPOSE KITTY HATES MUTIES?!
EARTH TO LARRY--YOU STILL THERE, CHUM?
NOPE. JUST BEAMED UP AND WARPED AWAY.
SHOULD I TELL HER, TRUST HER--
--I DON'T KNOW!
IF YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM, LARRY-- IF YOU WANT TO TALK-- I'M WILLING TO LISTEN.
THAT'S THE SPIRIT, FLORENCE PRYDENGALE! OR IS IT, KITTY FREUD.
PUT A SOCK IN IT, ILLYANA!
HEY, I HEARD THIS NEAT JOKE, THE LATEST THING AT SCHOOL:
"HOW MANY MUTIES DOES IT TAKE TO SCREW IN A LIGHTBULB?"
THEY'RE NOT LAUGHING!
I TOLD IT WRONG!!
WHAT TO DO--?!
TELL ANOTHER!
"A MUTIE WALKS INTO A BAR..."
SPEAKIN' OF WALKIN', IT'S PAST TIME WE WERE ON OUR WAY HOME.
THEY'RE REALLY ANGRY!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!!
WHY'D I TELL THOSE STUPID JOKES?! ALL I WANTED WAS TO IMPRESS THEM, TO BELONG--!
KITTY, WAIT--!
CAN I CALL YOU, SEE YOU AGAIN?!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A NICE KID, LARRY-- MY MISTAKE.
PLEASE?!!
GOOD-BYE, LARRY.

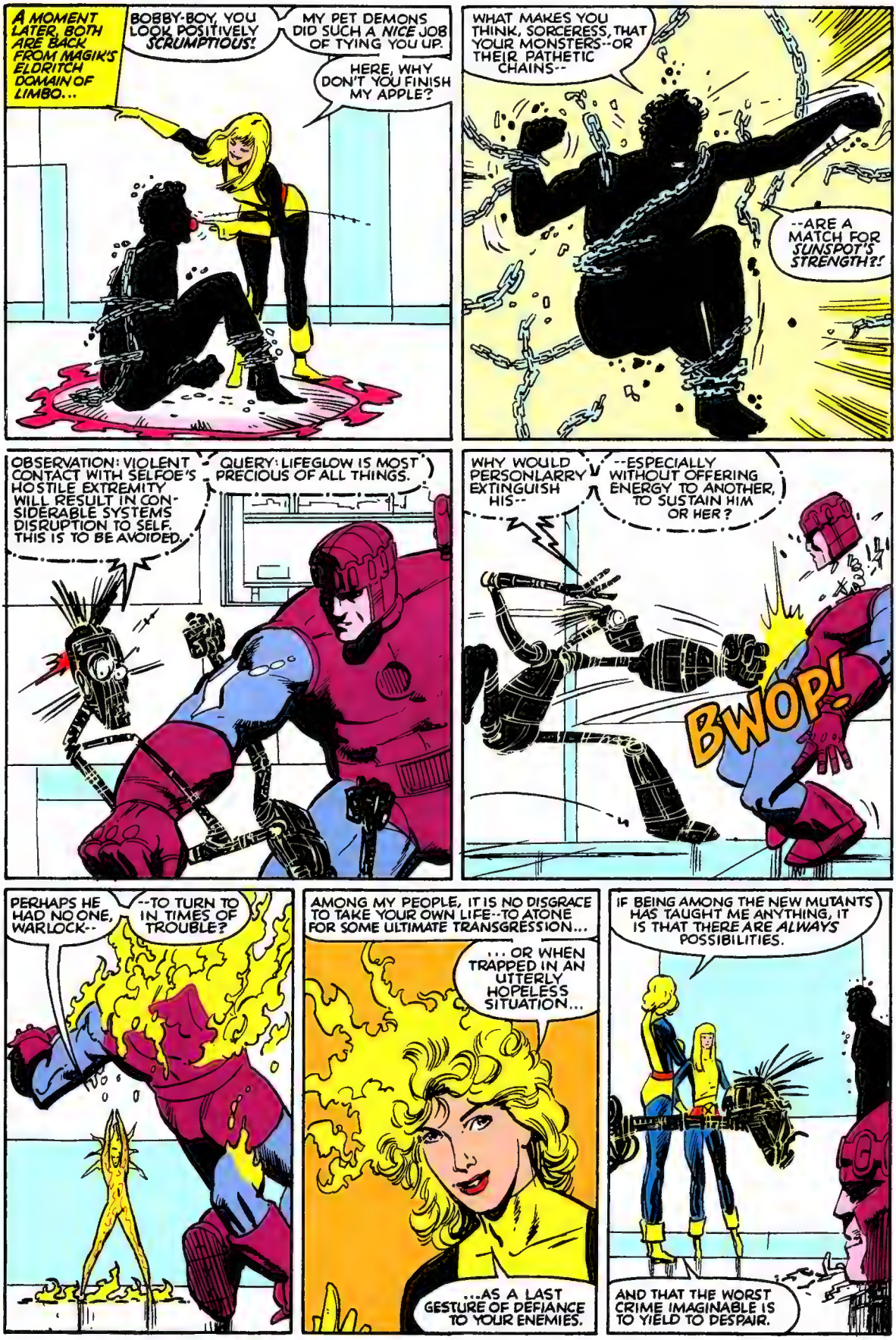

IT'S OVER.
I OPENED MY BIG MOUTH...
...AND RUINED EVERYTHING!
HE DOESN'T FEEL ANY BETTER AFTER THE LONG, BITTER, MISERABLE WALK ACROSS TOWN...
...HIS HAND CONSTANTLY, REFLEXIVELY CLENCHING, CRUMPLING, PLAYING WITH THE "X-FACTOR" FLIER IN HIS JACKET POCKET. "DEAL WITH MUTANTS," IT SAYS. BUT HOW?
WILL THEY TAKE MY POWER AWAY? IS THAT POSSIBLE?! OR PUT ME IN JAIL?!! KILL ME?!!!
WHAT GIVES THEM THE RIGHT?! I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING, HURT ANYONE-- WHY PICK ON ME?!
IT ISN'T FAIR!
BIG DEAL. LIFE ISN'T FAIR, THAT'S WHAT DAD ALWAYS SAYS.
HE SHOULD KNOW, WITH ME FOR A SON.
THIS IS AN IMPORTANT TRIP FOR HIM AND MOM.
I'M ONLY SUPPOSED TO CALL IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY.
WHAT DO I SAY-- "HI, DAD, I'M FEELING 'LOUSY AND LONELY"?
HE'LL ASK WHY?
DO I TELL HIM THEN, WHAT I AM AND WHAT IT'S DOING TO ME? OR CLAM UP, AS USUAL?
HE'LL ASK IF IT CAN WAIT...
...'CAUSE THE CALL'S LONG DISTANCE AND THAT COSTS MONEY.
WHAT THE HECK, I'M A BIG BOY--
--I'M SUPPOSED TO BE ABLE TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!
SLAM

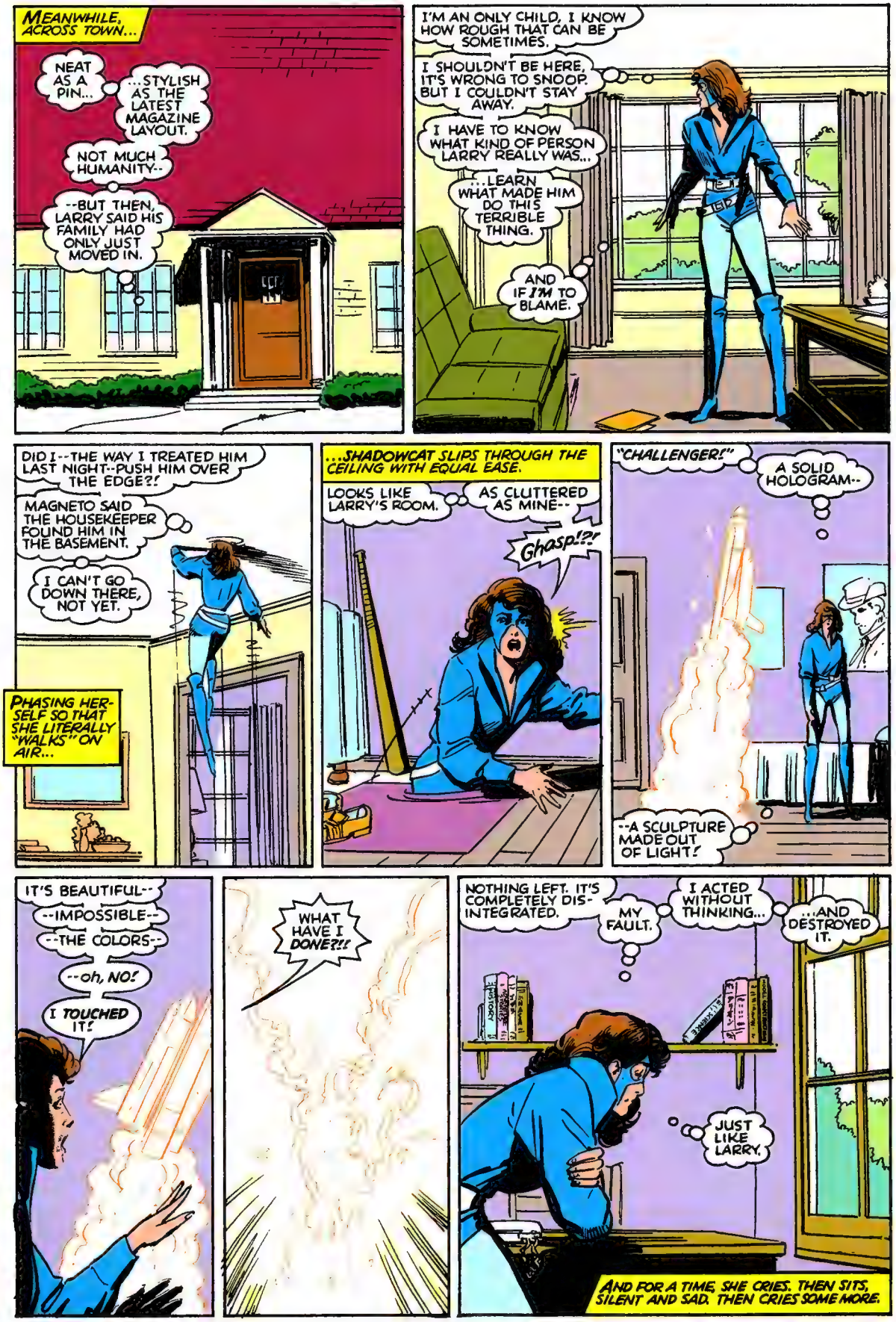

MAYBE I'LL FEEL BETTER IF I GET DRUNK?
NEVER DONE IT BEFORE.
WHAT THE HECK--
--YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE--
--WHY NOT GO FOR THE GUSTO!
PHEIA YUGCK!
HOW CAN ANYONE STOMACH THIS GUNK?!
IT TASTES AWFUL!
GREAT.
JUST GREAT!
I'M SUCH A WIMPED-OUT GEEK, I CAN'T EVEN GET PLASTERED.
MAN, I'M SO TIRED.
I WISH I COULD SLEEP.
BUT THE MINUTE I LIE DOWN--
--BINGO-- WIDE AWAKE!
NO TRESPASSING
BEWARE!
DO NOT ENTER
FORBIDDEN ZONE!!
THIS MEANS YOU!!
FOLKS FIGURE MY LOCKING MY ROOM IS JUST AN ADOLESCENT PHASE.
IF THEY ONLY KNEW THE TRUTH--!

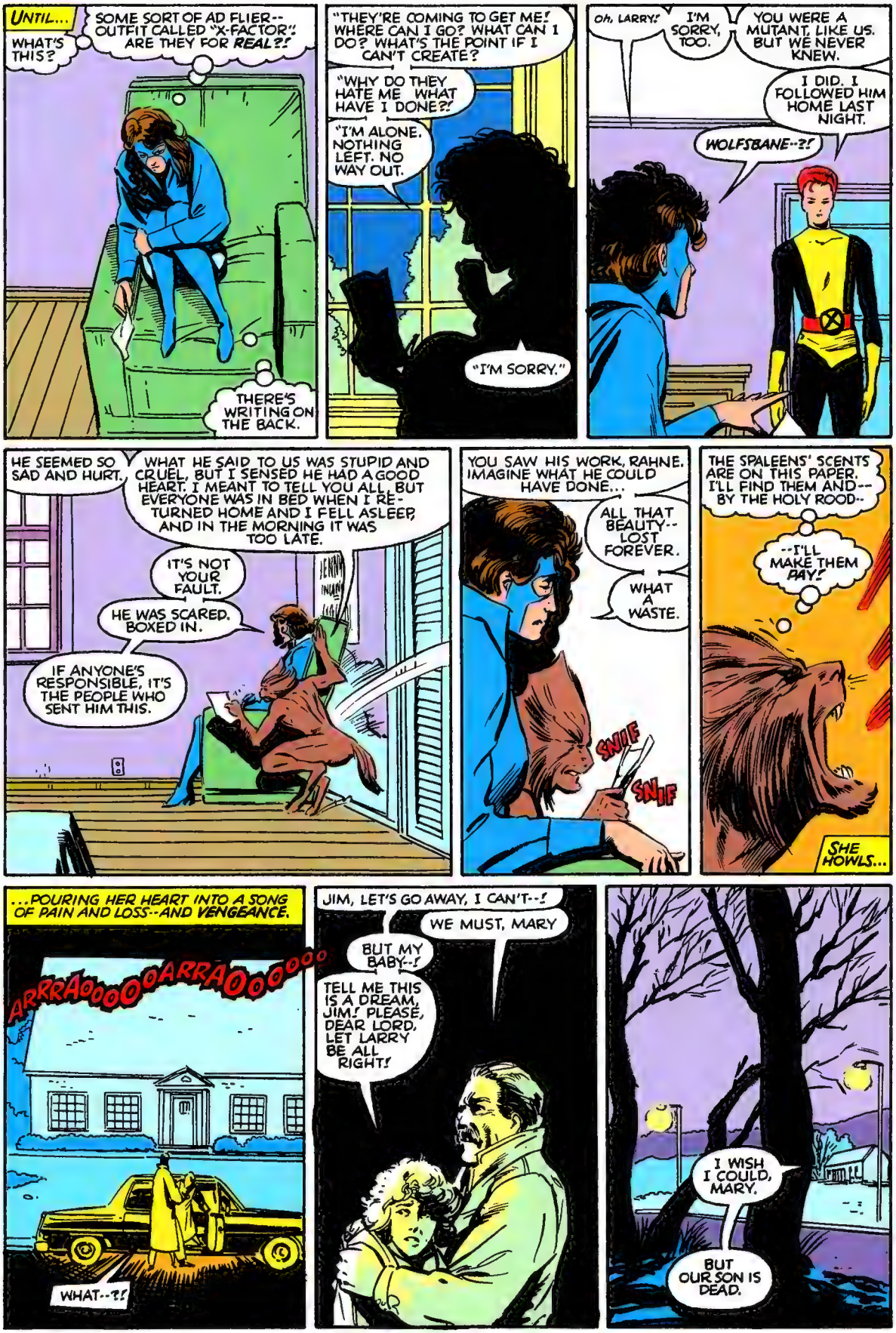

SHUTTLE'S THE ONLY PIECE I'VE DONE LATELY WORTH KEEPING.
I WAS REALLY HOPING I COULD SHOW IT TO KITTY.
MAYBE I SHOULD PHONE?
IT'S TOO LATE.
SERVES ME RIGHT.
BLAST! MY CONCENTRATION IS THE PITS TONIGHT.
I CAN'T COHERE A STABLE IMAGE.
WISH I COULD RELAX.
BUT HOW CAN I, WITH THAT X-FACTOR OUTFIT AFTER ME?
THIS IS CRAZY. I FEEL LIKE A CRIMINAL!
IN X-FACTOR'S EYES...
...I GUESS I AM.
OTHERWISE, WHY WOULD THEY BE IN BUSINESS?
IF THEY TAKE AWAY MY POWER--!
I'D RATHER BE DEAD!
I WAS RIGHT!
THERE WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT LARRY!
HE'S A MUTANT, JUST LIKE US.
Oh, WAIT'LL I TELL THE OTHERS--THEY'LL BE SO SURPRISED! AN' PLEASED, 'CAUSE EVERYONE MOSTLY LIKED HIM, TILL HE TOLD THOSE SILLY, HURTFUL JOKES. I KNEW HE DIDN'T MEAN THEM!
BUT AS THE YOUNG SCOTS WEREWOLF, RAHNE SINCLAIR, RACES EXCITEDLY INTO THE NIGHT...
BRING BRRING
WE CALLED 'EM, MUTIE.
X-FACTOR'S ON THEIR WAY.
YOU'RE DONE FOR!

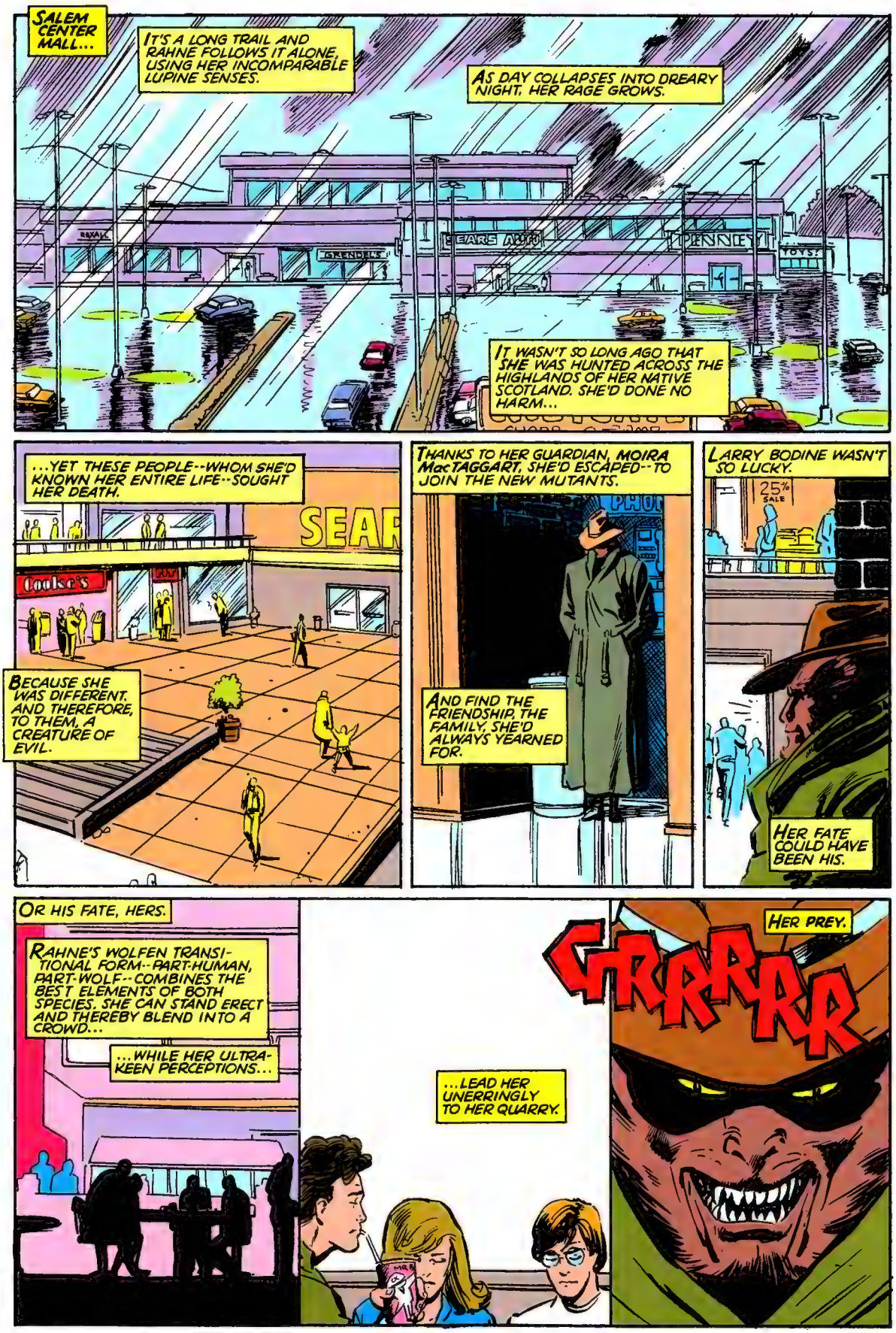

THE FOLLOWING MORNING...
...AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS...
...SECRET HOME OF THE NEW MUTANTS...
WHAT'S BURNING?!
MAGMA-- IT'S HER TURN TO COOK BREAKFAST.
DON'T GET TOO CLOSE, Y'ALL-- SHE'S HOT!
CAN'T YOU USE THE STOVE, AMARA?
CERTAINLY, DOUGLAS-- BUT THIS IS MORE FUN.
AND EXCELLENT PRACTICE IN REFINING MY CONTROL OVER MY ABILITIES.
YOU SET THE HOUSE ON FIRE, GIRL...
...YOU FLUNK!
TSCHAA, KITTY.
I SHALL BE MORE CAREFUL THAN THAT!
HOTCAKES! AN' THEY SMELL DELICIOUS!
FLATTERER! YOU WOULD SAY SO, IF THEY WERE BURNED CINDERS.
SAM! DANI!! KITTY!!! EVERY-ONE!!!!
I'VE WONDERFUL NEWS!
EXCUSE ME, RAHNE, BUT COULD THAT WAIT A MOMENT?
AYE, HEAD-MASTER. OF COURSE.
I'VE AN ANNOUNCE-MENT THAT CONCERNS YOU ALL.
I'VE JUST BEEN INFORMED BY Ms. HOGARTH-- PRINCIPAL OF SALEM CENTER HIGH SCHOOL-- THAT ONE OF HER STUDENTS, WHO MANY OF YOU MET LAST EVENING, LARRY BODINE...
...HAS COMMITTED SUICIDE.

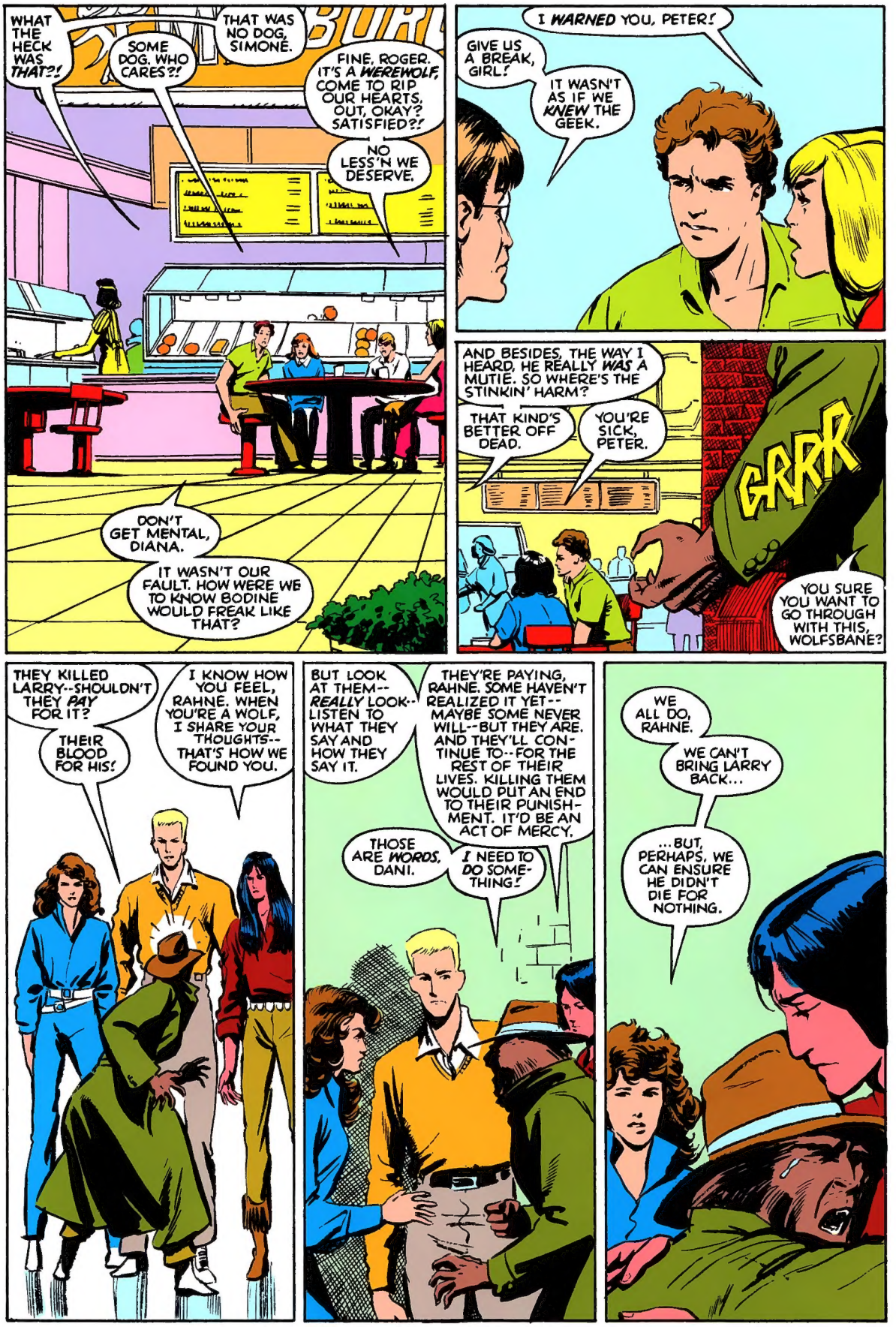
LATER-- DURING A SCHEDULED CLASS IN THE DANGER ROOM, THE UNDERGROUND TRAINING COMPLEX WHERE THE NEW MUTANTS HONE THE USE OF THEIR VARIOUS POWERS, AS INDIVIDUALS AND A TEAM...
HE HUNG HIMSELF.
WHAT COULD BE SO AWFUL, DANI, TO MAKE SOMEONE DO THAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I SENSED A WRONGNESS AT THE DANCE. IT MUST HAVE BEEN A VALKYRIE PREMONITION OF LARRY'S DEATH. HAD I STAYED-- HAD I KNOWN --I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO HELP. EVEN PREVENT IT.
BUT I DIDN'T.
I'VE LEARNED-- PAINFULLY, DOUG--
--THAT I CAN'T SAVE EVERYONE.
WE TRY OUR BEST...
...BUT DON'T ALWAYS SUCCEED.
MISSED ME, SUNSPOT!
YOU TELEPORTED!
THAT'S WHAT I DO, DUMMY. YOUR TEST IS TO CATCH ME...
...IF YOU CAN.
YOU ASK ME, THE BOY WAS A COWARD.
HE COULD NOT FACE...
...THE REAL WORLD...
...SO HE RAN AWAY.
Ehnh!
YOU LIVE, YOU DIE, IT HAPPENS--
--THEM'S THE BREAKS.
HIS PROBLEM, HIS DECISION, HIS FATE. NOT OURS.
GOT YOU!
THAT, CUTIE, DEPENDS ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW.
OH, NO!

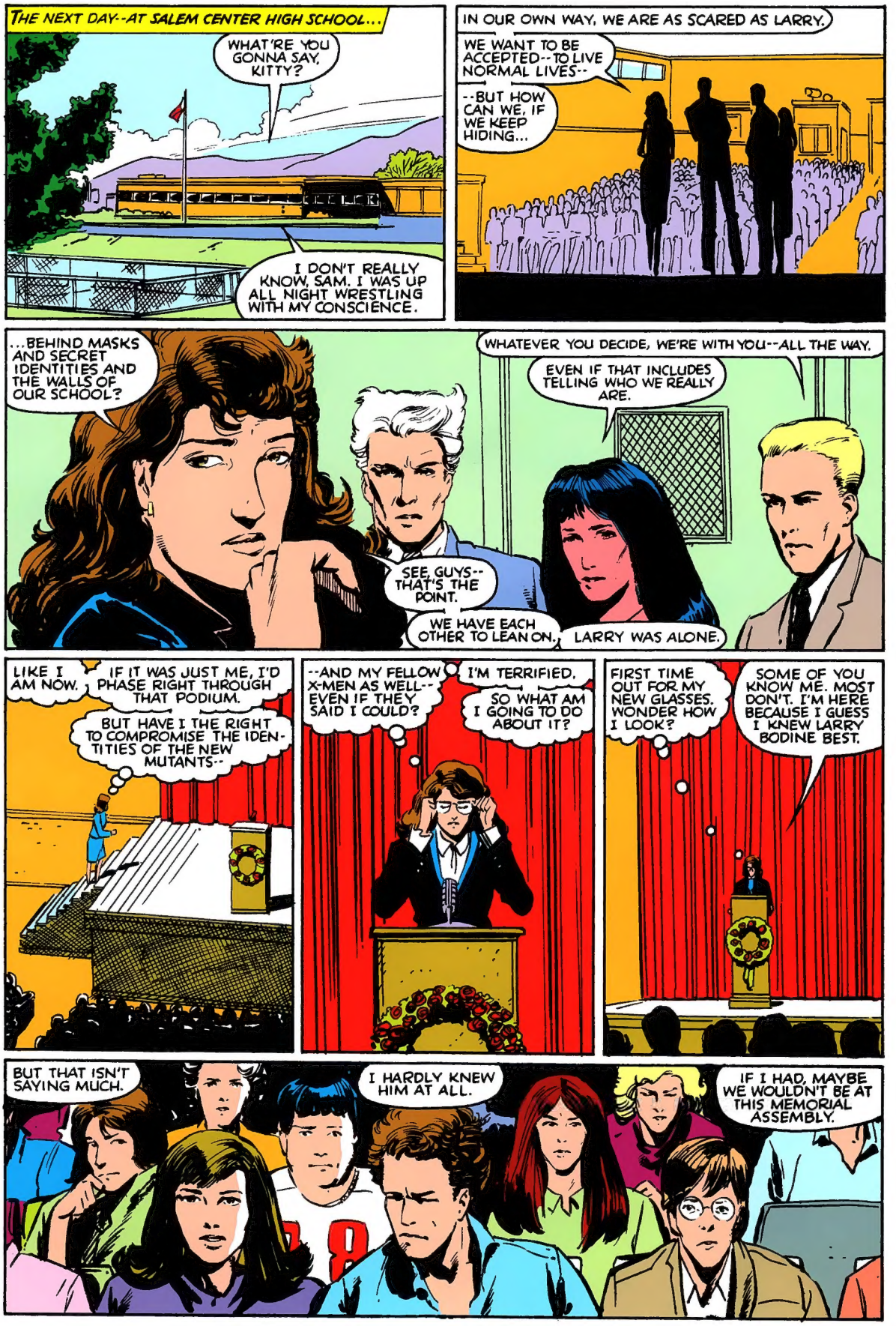

A MOMENT LATER, BOTH ARE BACK FROM MAGIK'S ELDRITCH DOMAIN OF LIMBO...
BOBBY-BOY, YOU LOOK POSITIVELY SCRUMPTIOUS!
MY PET DEMONS DID SUCH A NICE JOB OF TYING YOU UP.
HERE, WHY DON'T YOU FINISH MY APPLE?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK, SORCERESS, THAT YOUR MONSTERS--OR THEIR PATHETIC CHAINS--
--ARE A MATCH FOR SUNSPOT'S STRENGTH?!
OBSERVATION: VIOLENT CONTACT WITH SELFOE'S HOSTILE EXTREMITY WILL RESULT IN CONSIDERABLE SYSTEMS DISRUPTION TO SELF. THIS IS TO BE AVOIDED.
QUERY: LIFEGLOW IS MOST PRECIOUS OF ALL THINGS.
WHY WOULD PERSONLARRY EXTINGUISH HIS--
--ESPECIALLY WITHOUT OFFERING ENERGY TO ANOTHER, TO SUSTAIN HIM OR HER?
BWOP!
PERHAPS HE HAD NO ONE, WARLOCK--
--TO TURN TO IN TIMES OF TROUBLE?
AMONG MY PEOPLE, IT IS NO DISGRACE TO TAKE YOUR OWN LIFE--TO ATONE FOR SOME ULTIMATE TRANSGRESSION...
...OR WHEN TRAPPED IN AN UTTERLY HOPELESS SITUATION...
...AS A LAST GESTURE OF DEFIANCE TO YOUR ENEMIES.
IF BEING AMONG THE NEW MUTANTS HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT IS THAT THERE ARE ALWAYS POSSIBILITIES.
AND THAT THE WORST CRIME IMAGINABLE IS TO YIELD TO DESPAIR.

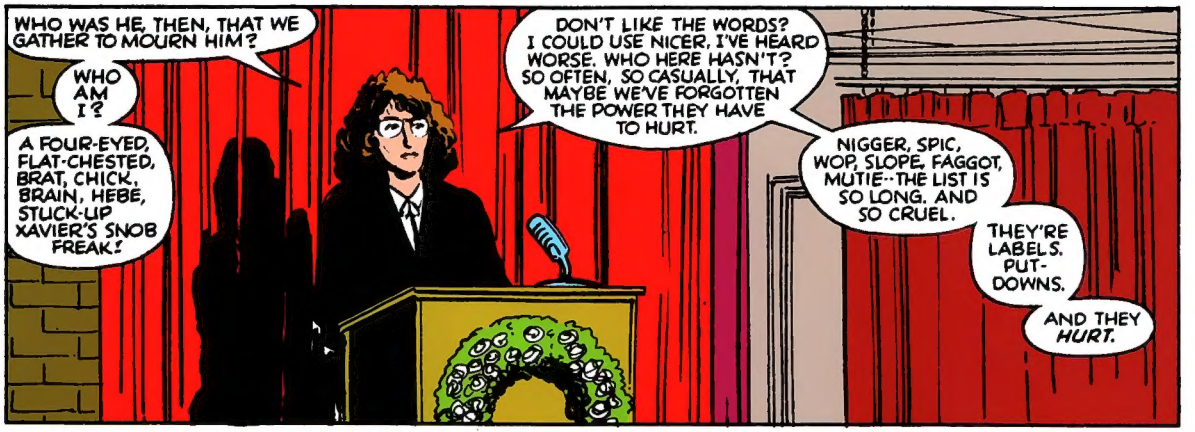

MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN...
NEAT AS A PIN...
...STYLISH AS THE LATEST MAGAZINE LAYOUT.
NOT MUCH HUMANITY--
--BUT THEN, LARRY SAID HIS FAMILY HAD ONLY JUST MOVED IN.
I'M AN ONLY CHILD, I KNOW HOW ROUGH THAT CAN BE SOMETIMES.
I SHOULDN'T BE HERE, IT'S WRONG TO SNOOP. BUT I COULDN'T STAY AWAY.
I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF PERSON LARRY REALLY WAS...
...LEARN WHAT MADE HIM DO THIS TERRIBLE THING.
AND IF I'M TO BLAME.
DID I--THE WAY I TREATED HIM LAST NIGHT--PUSH HIM OVER THE EDGE?!
MAGNETO SAID THE HOUSEKEEPER FOUND HIM IN THE BASEMENT.
I CAN'T GO DOWN THERE, NOT YET.
PHASING HERSELF SO THAT SHE LITERALLY "WALKS" ON AIR...
...SHADOWCAT SLIPS THROUGH THE CEILING WITH EQUAL EASE.
LOOKS LIKE LARRY'S ROOM.
AS CLUTTERED AS MINE--
Ghasp!?!
"CHALLENGER!"
A SOLID HOLOGRAM--
--A SCULPTURE MADE OUT OF LIGHT!
IT'S BEAUTIFUL--
--IMPOSSIBLE--
--THE COLORS--
--oh, NO!
I TOUCHED IT!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!!
NOTHING LEFT. IT'S COMPLETELY DISINTEGRATED.
MY FAULT.
I ACTED WITHOUT THINKING...
...AND DESTROYED IT.
JUST LIKE LARRY.
AND FOR A TIME, SHE CRIES. THEN SITS, SILENT AND SAD. THEN CRIES SOME MORE.


UNTIL...
WHAT'S THIS?
SOME SORT OF AD FLIER--OUTFIT CALLED "X-FACTOR": ARE THEY FOR REAL?!
THERE'S WRITING ON THE BACK.
"THEY'RE COMING TO GET ME! WHERE CAN I GO? WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT'S THE POINT IF I CAN'T CREATE?
"WHY DO THEY HATE ME WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
"I'M ALONE. NOTHING LEFT. NO WAY OUT.
"I'M SORRY."
OH, LARRY!
I'M SORRY, TOO.
YOU WERE A MUTANT, LIKE US. BUT WE NEVER KNEW.
I DID. I FOLLOWED HIM HOME LAST NIGHT.
WOLFSBANE--?!
HE SEEMED SO SAD AND HURT.
WHAT HE SAID TO US WAS STUPID AND CRUEL, BUT I SENSED HE HAD A GOOD HEART. I MEANT TO TELL YOU ALL, BUT EVERYONE WAS IN BED WHEN I RETURNED HOME AND I FELL ASLEEP, AND IN THE MORNING IT WAS TOO LATE.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
HE WAS SCARED. BOXED IN.
IF ANYONE'S RESPONSIBLE, IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO SENT HIM THIS.
YOU SAW HIS WORK, RAHNE. IMAGINE WHAT HE COULD HAVE DONE...
ALL THAT BEAUTY--LOST FOREVER.
WHAT A WASTE.
SNIF
SNIF
THE SPALEENS' SCENTS ARE ON THIS PAPER. I'LL FIND THEM AND--BY THE HOLY ROOD--
--I'LL MAKE THEM PAY!
SHE HOWLS...
...POURING HER HEART INTO A SONG OF PAIN AND LOSS--AND VENGEANCE.
ARRRAOOOOOARRAOOOOOO
WHAT--?!
JIM, LET'S GO AWAY, I CAN'T--!
WE MUST, MARY
BUT MY BABY--!
TELL ME THIS IS A DREAM, JIM! PLEASE, DEAR LORD, LET LARRY BE ALL RIGHT!
I WISH I COULD, MARY.
BUT OUR SON IS DEAD.

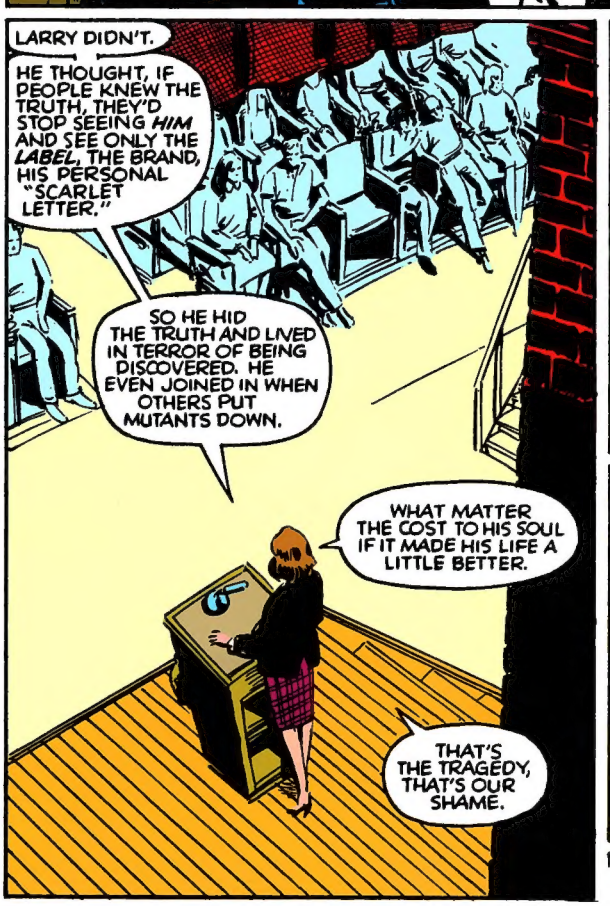

SALEM CENTER MALL...
IT'S A LONG TRAIL AND RAHNE FOLLOWS IT ALONE, USING HER INCOMPARABLE LUPINE SENSES.
AS DAY COLLAPSES INTO DREARY NIGHT, HER RAGE GROWS.
IT WASN'T SO LONG AGO THAT SHE WAS HUNTED ACROSS THE HIGHLANDS OF HER NATIVE SCOTLAND. SHE'D DONE NO HARM...
...YET THESE PEOPLE--WHOM SHE'D KNOWN HER ENTIRE LIFE--SOUGHT HER DEATH.
BECAUSE SHE WAS DIFFERENT. AND THEREFORE, TO THEM, A CREATURE OF EVIL.
THANKS TO HER GUARDIAN, MOIRA MacTAGGART, SHE'D ESCAPED--TO JOIN THE NEW MUTANTS.
AND FIND THE FRIENDSHIP, THE FAMILY, SHE'D ALWAYS YEARNED FOR.
LARRY BODINE WASN'T SO LUCKY.
25% SALE
HER FATE COULD HAVE BEEN HIS.
OR HIS FATE, HERS.
RAHNE'S WOLFEN TRANSITIONAL FORM--PART-HUMAN, PART-WOLF--COMBINES THE BEST ELEMENTS OF BOTH SPECIES. SHE CAN STAND ERECT AND THEREBY BLEND INTO A CROWD...
...WHILE HER ULTRA-KEEN PERCEPTIONS...
...LEAD HER UNERRINGLY TO HER QUARRY.
HER PREY.
GRRRRR

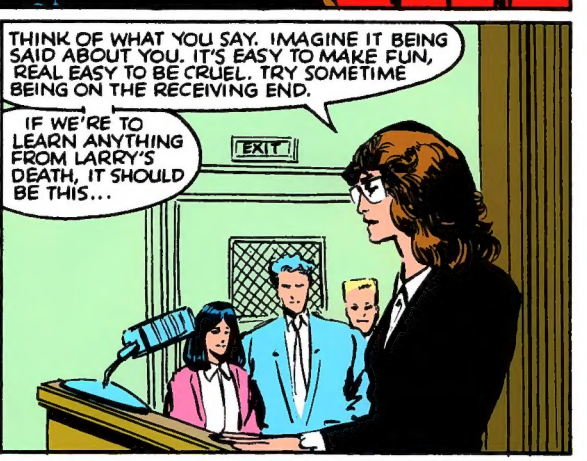

WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?!
SOME DOG. WHO CARES?!
THAT WAS NO DOG, SIMONE.
FINE, ROGER. IT'S A WEREWOLF, COME TO RIP OUR HEARTS, OUT, OKAY? SATISFIED?!
NO LESS'N WE DESERVE.
DON'T GET MENTAL, DIANA.
IT WASN'T OUR FAULT. HOW WERE WE TO KNOW BODINE WOULD FREAK LIKE THAT?
I WARNED YOU, PETER!
GIVE US A BREAK, GIRL!
IT WASN'T AS IF WE KNEW THE GEEK.
AND BESIDES, THE WAY I HEARD, HE REALLY WAS A MUTIE. SO WHERE'S THE STINKIN' HARM?
THAT KIND'S BETTER OFF DEAD.
YOU'RE SICK, PETER.
GRRR
YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS, WOLFSBANE?
THEY KILLED LARRY--SHOULDN'T THEY PAY FOR IT?
THEIR BLOOD FOR HIS!
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, RAHNE. WHEN YOU'RE A WOLF, I SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS--THAT'S HOW WE FOUND YOU.
BUT LOOK AT THEM--REALLY LOOK--LISTEN TO WHAT THEY SAY AND HOW THEY SAY IT.
THEY'RE PAYING, RAHNE. SOME HAVEN'T REALIZED IT YET--MAYBE SOME NEVER WILL--BUT THEY ARE. AND THEY'LL CONTINUE TO--FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES. KILLING THEM WOULD PUT AN END TO THEIR PUNISHMENT. IT'D BE AN ACT OF MERCY.
THOSE ARE WORDS, DANI.
I NEED TO DO SOMETHING!
WE ALL DO, RAHNE.
WE CAN'T BRING LARRY BACK...
...BUT, PERHAPS, WE CAN ENSURE HE DIDN'T DIE FOR NOTHING.

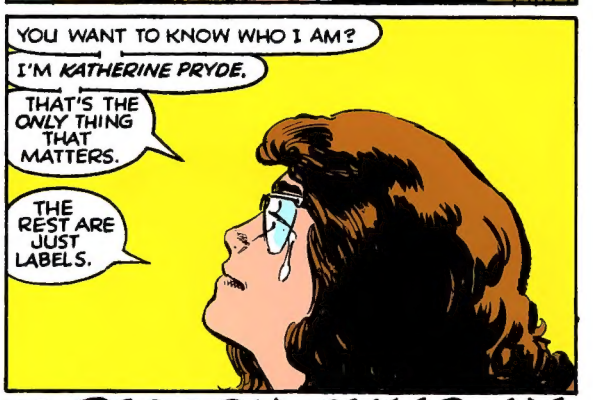

THE NEXT DAY--AT SALEM CENTER HIGH SCHOOL...
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA SAY, KITTY?
I DON'T REALLY KNOW, SAM. I WAS UP ALL NIGHT WRESTLING WITH MY CONSCIENCE.
IN OUR OWN WAY, WE ARE AS SCARED AS LARRY.
WE WANT TO BE ACCEPTED--TO LIVE NORMAL LIVES--
--BUT HOW CAN WE, IF WE KEEP HIDING...
...BEHIND MASKS AND SECRET IDENTITIES AND THE WALLS OF OUR SCHOOL?
WHATEVER YOU DECIDE, WE'RE WITH YOU--ALL THE WAY.
EVEN IF THAT INCLUDES TELLING WHO WE REALLY ARE.
SEE, GUYS--THAT'S THE POINT.
WE HAVE EACH OTHER TO LEAN ON.
LARRY WAS ALONE.
LIKE I AM NOW.
IF IT WAS JUST ME, I'D PHASE RIGHT THROUGH THAT PODIUM.
BUT HAVE I THE RIGHT TO COMPROMISE THE IDENTITIES OF THE NEW MUTANTS--
--AND MY FELLOW X-MEN AS WELL--EVEN IF THEY SAID I COULD?
I'M TERRIFIED.
SO WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?
FIRST TIME OUT FOR MY NEW GLASSES. WONDER HOW I LOOK?
SOME OF YOU KNOW ME. MOST DON'T. I'M HERE BECAUSE I GUESS I KNEW LARRY BODINE BEST.
BUT THAT ISN'T SAYING MUCH.
I HARDLY KNEW HIM AT ALL.
IF I HAD, MAYBE WE WOULDN'T BE AT THIS MEMORIAL ASSEMBLY.


WHO WAS HE, THEN, THAT WE GATHER TO MOURN HIM?
WHO AM I?
A FOUR-EYED, FLAT-CHESTED, BRAT, CHICK, BRAIN, HEBE, STUCK-UP XAVIER'S SNOB FREAK!
DON'T LIKE THE WORDS? I COULD USE NICER, I'VE HEARD WORSE. WHO HERE HASN'T? SO OFTEN, SO CASUALLY, THAT MAYBE WE'VE FORGOTTEN THE POWER THEY HAVE TO HURT.
NIGGER, SPIC, WOP, SLOPE, FAGGOT, MUTIE--THE LIST IS SO LONG. AND SO CRUEL.
THEY'RE LABELS. PUT-DOWNS.
AND THEY HURT.

BUT USUALLY WE LAUGH IT OFF OR HIT BACK--WITH WORDS OF OUR OWN, OR FISTS--OR WE SUFFER IN SILENCE. NO BIG DEAL--THIS IS THE ROUGH EDGE OF REALITY, RIGHT? WHY MAKE A FUSS?
TROUBLE WAS, WHEN SOMEONE LABELED LARRY BODINE A "MUTIE," THEY HIT HOME--BECAUSE HE WAS.
HIS POWER CREATED BEAUTY. THAT'S IT. HE DID WITH LIGHT AND COLOR WHAT MOZART DID WITH MUSIC. AND HE WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE ACCEPTED BY HIS PEERS, AND POSSIBLY EVEN LIKED--
--AND ISN'T THAT WHAT ANY OF US REALLY WANT? TO HAVE FRIENDS. PEOPLE TO CARE FOR US? NOT TO BE ALONE?
IF WE'RE LUCKY, WE HAVE SOMEONE TO TURN TO.


LARRY DIDN'T.
HE THOUGHT, IF PEOPLE KNEW THE TRUTH, THEY'D STOP SEEING HIM AND SEE ONLY THE LABEL, THE BRAND, HIS PERSONAL "SCARLET LETTER."
SO HE HID THE TRUTH AND LIVED IN TERROR OF BEING DISCOVERED. HE EVEN JOINED IN WHEN OTHERS PUT MUTANTS DOWN.
WHAT MATTER THE COST TO HIS SOUL IF IT MADE HIS LIFE A LITTLE BETTER.
THAT'S THE TRAGEDY, THAT'S OUR SHAME.


THINK OF WHAT YOU SAY. IMAGINE IT BEING SAID ABOUT YOU. IT'S EASY TO MAKE FUN, REAL EASY TO BE CRUEL. TRY SOMETIME BEING ON THE RECEIVING END.
IF WE'RE TO LEARN ANYTHING FROM LARRY'S DEATH, IT SHOULD BE THIS...
EXIT




NEXT: BLOODY SUNDAY!

MINUTEMEN
Quick
STOP
RST